SCOTT'S POEMS

POETICAL WORKS

OF

SIR WALTER SCOTT, BART.

With Illustrations

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To.
Mary R. Fraser
from
Jessie H Gardner.

12th Dec! 1903

INTRODUCTORY.

AN Introduction to Scott's Poems would hardly be complete without a brief account of the conditions under which they were written, and the man who wrote them, even though to write of Scott is to tell a thrice-told tale.

Walter Scott, the lineal descendant of that Border hero who took three days to consider whether he would marry Sir Gideon Murray's ugly daughter, Meikle-mouthed Meg, or hang on Sir Gideon's gallows, was the son of a Writer to the Signet, whose portrait he has drawn in the character of Alexander Fairford, in REDGAUNTLET. His mother was a Miss Rutherford, the daughter of a physician. He was thus born in perhaps the most advantageous rank of life for an ambitious lad, for he belonged to a good old family, of which he might be justly proud, and was taught by all around him that the road to success lies through hard work. If he inherited little of his father's love of order, thrift, and stately ceremonial manners, he learned from his example industry and perseverance.

He was born on August 15th, 1771, the ninth of twelve children, of whom six died in infancy. At the age of eighteen months the child fell lame, and remained so throughout life. But this lameness did not affect his activity of body, which was always very remarkable. His reputation at school was better among his comrades than with his masters, who, however, seem to have recognised the ability of the precocious boy, who would extemporise stories when he was not organising street fights or climbing the Castle rocks.

He became a lawyer, and practised at the bar, nominally, for fourteen years, never making any large income by his work, though he is said to have been a sound lawyer. Eight years after being called, he was appointed Sheriff of Selkirkshire, a post worth £300 a-year, and he discharged the duties of a Clerk of Session for five years gratuitously, in order to secure his succession when the post should fall vacant. The acceptance of these two posts shows clearly that he had little hope of real or brilliant success in his profession. Lawyers who hope to obtain the splendid prizes of the profession do not accept these small offices. During these years, however, he was becoming known for other things than the law: he was an enthusiastic antiquarian; he loved ballads; and he was drifting gradually, but surely, into literature.

His first serious attempt was a translation of Bürger's *Lenore*, vigorous and spirited.

"Tramp! tramp! along the land they rode;
Splash! splash! along the sea:
The scourge is red, the spur drops blood,
The flashing pebbles flee."

But his first literary success was with his *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, which appeared in January, 1802, in two volumes. The success of this work was immediate and very great, the whole of the first edition of 800 copies having been sold within the year.

In this year also Scott composed the first canto of his *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, which was not published until the year 1805. So great was the success of this poem that 44,000 copies were sold in the space of twenty-five years. *Marmion*, Scott's greatest poem, was published three years later.

His course was now plainly before him; we hear no more of nibbling at the law; literature claimed him altogether. The poems followed each other in rapid succession, but none of them reached the same level, the same force as was shown in *Marmion*. Yet the *Lord of the Isles* and *Rokeby* are wonderful productions. It was in 1814 that the Waverley Novels were first commenced.

The rest of the life of Sir Walter Scott—how he wrote novels long after the first force and rush of his genius had fallen low; how he bought lands and proposed to found a family; how he speared salmon and rode to hounds; how he was made a baronet; how he fell into dire troubles, and struggled manfully to pay off enormous debts which he had not contracted; how his brain clouded gradually, and how he died on September the 21st, 1832, six months after Goethe—all this may be read in the pages of *Lockhart*.

It remains to say a few words of his poetry.

Many critics have discussed the reasons for the charm of Scott's verse, the limits of his powers, the characteristics of his style. It is the province of criticism to find out why poetry delights, and the different kinds and degrees of delight afforded by poets. Many of the criticisms on Scott—for example, the discussion as to whether he possessed any of the Homeric spirit, and if so, in what measure—seem idle and futile in the extreme. The charms do not seem to be difficult to understand—Scott is simple; he is vigorous; he is sympathetic; he is clear in conception; he is musical. What more is wanted to explain his magical powers? If anything more, then the fact that he is full of action; his poetry is never dull; it is never introspective; the lines are always strongly drawn. As a piece of descriptive poetry what can be finer than this?—

"November's sky is chill and drear,
November's leaf is red and sear:
Late, gazing down the steepy linn,
That hems our little garden in,
Low in its dark and narrow glen,
You scarce the rivulet might ken,
So thick the tangled greenwood grew,
So feeble trill'd the streamlet through:
Now murmuring hoarse, and frequent seen
Through bush and brier, no longer green,
An angry brook, it sweeps the glade,
Brawls over rock and wild cascade,

And, foaming brown with doubled speed,
Hurries its waters to the Tweed."

This is description of a kind which any one can understand. It is simple, clear, and *full of colour*. It is to be observed that Scott had a remarkably keen eye for colour, and that his best effects, as Ruskin has pointed out, are due to the employment of colour. The above is descriptive of scenery; but let us take a description of another kind. Here is his account of the tents near Edinburgh:—

"A thousand, did I say? I ween
Thousands on thousands there were seen,
That chequered all the heath between
The streamlet and the town;
In crossing ranks extended far,
Forming a camp irregular:
Oft giving way where still there stood
Some relics of the old oak wood,
That darkly huge did intervene,
And tamed the glaring white with green:
In their extended lines there lay
A martial kingdom's vast array."

Remark, here, the extraordinary directness. Nothing is put in "for the sake of the rhyme;" all is clear, simple, and direct; and there is, besides, thrown in, as it were, out of the fulness of the poet's heart, that glow of sympathy which none but a born poet can command. It is in description, of course, that Scott chiefly excels. Here is one more extract, a description of a Scotch winter:—

"The sheep before the pinching heaven
To sheltered down and dale are driven,
Where yet some faded herbage pines,
And yet a watery sunbeam shines:
In meek despondency they eye
The withered sward and wintry sky;
And from beneath their summer hill
Stray sadly by Glenkinnon's rill."

We extract from a recent remarkable work on Scott† a few words on the opening of the *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, which seem to us to sum up nearly all that may be said as to Scott's method.

"The singular depth of the romantic glow in this passage, and its equally singular simplicity,—a simplicity which makes it intelligible to every one,—are conspicuous to every reader. It is not what is called classical poetry, for there is no severe outline,—no sculptured completeness and repose,—no satisfying wholeness of effect to the eye or the mind,—no embodiment of a great action. The poet gives us a breath, a ripple of alternating fear and hope in the heart of an old man, and that is

† Hutton's Scott, p. 49; Macmillan & Co., 1880.

all. He catches an emotion that had its roots deep in the past, and that is striving onward towards something in the future;—he traces the wistfulness and self-distrust with which age seeks to recover the feelings of youth,—the delight with which it greets them when they come,—the hesitation and diffidence with which it recalls them as they pass away, and questions the triumph it has just won,—and he paints all this without subtlety, without complexity, but with a swiftness such as few poets ever surpassed."

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THE

LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL:

A POEM IN SIX CANTOS.

Dum relego, scripsisse pudet; quia plurima cerno,
Me quoque, qui feci judice, digna lini.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

CHARLES, EARL OF DALKEITH,

THIS POEM IS INSCRIBED BY

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

The Poem, now offered to the Public, is intended to illustrate the customs and manners which anciently prevailed on the Borders of England and Scotland. The inhabitants, living in a state partly pastoral and partly warlike, and combining habits of constant depredation with the influence of a rude spirit of chivalry, were often engaged in scenes highly susceptible of poetical ornament. As the description of scenery and manners was more the object of the Author than a combined and regular narrative, the plan of the Ancient Metrical Romance was adopted, which allows greater latitude, in this respect, than would be consistent with the dignity of a regular Poem. The same model offered other facilities, as it permits an occasional alteration of measure, which, in some degree, authorises the change of rhythm in the text. The machinery, also, adopted from popular belief, would have seemed puerile in a Poem which did not partake of the rudeness of the old Ballad, or Metrical Romance.

For these reasons, the Poem was put into the mouth of an ancient Minstrel, the last of the race, who, as he is supposed to have survived the Revolution, might have caught somewhat of the refinement of modern poetry, without losing the simplicity of his original model. The date of the Tale itself is about the middle of the sixteenth century, when most of the personages actually flourished. The time occupied by the action is Three Nights and Three Days.

INTRODUCTION TO EDITION 1830.

A POEM of nearly thirty years' standing may be supposed hardly to need an Introduction, since, without one, it has been able to keep itself afloat through the best part of a generation. Nevertheless, as, in the edition of the Waverley Novels now in course of publication [1830], I have imposed on myself the task of saying something concerning the purpose and history of each in their turn, I am desirous that the Poems for which I first received some marks of the public favour, should also be accompanied with such scraps of their literary history as may be supposed to carry interest along with them. Even if I should be mistaken in thinking that the secret history of what was once so popular may still attract public attention and curiosity, it seems to me not without its use to record the manner and circumstances under which the present, and other Poems on the same plan, attained for a season an extensive reputation.

I must resume the story of my literary labours at the period at which I broke off in the Essay on the Imitation of Popular Poetry, when I had enjoyed the first gleam of public favour, by the success of the first edition of the Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border. The second edition of that work, published in 1803, proved, in the language of the trade, rather a heavy concern. The demand in Scotland had been supplied by the first edition, and the curiosity of the English was not much awakened by poems in the rude garb of antiquity, accompanied with notes referring to the obscure feuds of barbarous clans, of whose very names civilised history was ignorant. It was, on the whole, one of those books which are more praised than they are read.

At this time I stood personally in a different position from that which I occupied when I first dipt my desperate pen in ink for other purposes than those of my profession. In 1796, when I first published the Translations from Burger, I was an insulated individual, with only my own wants to provide for, and having, in a great measure, my own inclinations alone to consult. In 1803, when the second edition of the Minstrelsy appeared, I had arrived at a period of life when men, however thoughtless, encounter duties and circumstances which press consideration and plans of life upon the most careless minds. I had been for some time married—was the father of a rising family—and, though fully enabled to meet the consequent demands upon me, it was my duty and desire to place myself in a situation which would enable me to make honourable provision against the various contingencies of life.

It may be readily supposed that the attempts which I had made in literature had been unfavourable to my success at the Bar. The goddess Themis is, at Edinburgh, and I suppose everywhere else, of a peculiarly jealous disposition. She will not readily consent to share her authority, and sternly demands from her votaries, not only that real duty be carefully attended to and discharged, but that a certain air of business shall be observed even in the midst of total idleness. It is prudent, if not absolutely necessary, in a young barrister, to appear completely engrossed by his profession; however destitute of employment he may in reality be, he ought to preserve, if possible, the appearance of full occupation. He should, therefore, seem perpetually engaged among his law papers, dusting them, as it were; and, as Ovid advises the fair,

"Si nullus erit pulvis, tamen excute nullum." †

Perhaps such extremity of attention is more especially required, considering the great number of counsellors who are called to the Bar, and how very small a proportion of them are finally disposed, or find encouragement, to follow the law as a profession. Hence the number of deserters is so great, that the least lingering look behind occasions a young novice to be set down as one of the intending fugitives. Certain it is, that the Scottish Themis was at this time peculiarly jealous of any flirtation with the Muses, on the part of those who had ranged themselves under her banners. This was probably owing to her consciousness of the superior attractions of her rivals. Of late, however, she has relaxed in some instances in this particular—an eminent example of which has been shown in the case of my friend Mr. Jeffrey, who, after long conducting one of the most influential literary periodicals of the age, with unquestionable ability, has been, by the general consent of his brethren, recently elected to be their Dean of Faculty, or President—being the highest acknowledgment of his professional talents which they had it in their power to offer. But this is an incident much beyond the ideas of a period of thirty years' distance, when a barrister who really possessed any turn for lighter literature, was at as much pains to conceal it as if it had in reality been something to be ashamed of; and I could mention more than one instance in which literature and society have suffered much loss, that jurisprudence might be enriched.

Such, however, was not my case; for the reader will not wonder that my open interference with matters of light literature diminished my employment in the weightier matters of the law. Nor did the solicitors, upon whose choice the counsel takes rank in his profession, do me less than justice, by regarding others among my contemporaries as fitter to discharge the duty due to their clients, than a young man who was taken up with running after ballads, whether Teutonic or National. My profession and I, therefore, came to stand nearly upon the footing which honest Slender consoled himself on having established with Mistress Anne Page; "There was no great love between us at the beginning, and it pleased Heaven to decrease it on farther acquaintance." I became sensible that the time was come when I must either buckle myself

† "If dust be none, yet brush that none away."

resolutely to the "toil by day, the lamp by night," renouncing all the Delilahs of my imagination, or bid adieu to the profession of the law, and hold another course.

I confess my own inclination revolted from the more severe choice, which might have been deemed by many the wiser alternative. As my transgressions had been numerous, my repentance must have been signalised by unusual sacrifices. I ought to have mentioned, that since my fourteenth or fifteenth year, my health, originally delicate, had become extremely robust. From infancy I had laboured under the infirmity of a severe lameness, but, as I believe is usually the case with men of spirit who suffer under personal inconveniences of this nature, I had, since the improvement of my health, in defiance of this incapacitating circumstance, distinguished myself by the endurance of toil on foot or horseback, having often walked thirty miles a-day, and rode upwards of a hundred, without resting. In this manner I made many pleasant journeys through parts of the country then not very accessible, gaining more amusement and instruction than I have been able to acquire since I have travelled in a more commodious manner. I practised most sylvan sports also, with some success, and with great delight. But these pleasures must have been all resigned, or used with great moderation, had I determined to regain my station at the Bar. It was even doubtful whether I could, with perfect character as a jurisconsult, retain a situation in a volunteer corps of cavalry, which I then held. The threats of invasion were at this time instant and menacing; the call by Britain on her children was universal, and was answered by some, who, like myself, consulted rather their desire than their ability to bear arms. My services, however, were found useful in assisting to maintain the discipline of the corps, being the point on which their constitution rendered them most amenable to military criticism. In other respects, the squadron was a fine one, consisting chiefly of handsome men, well mounted and armed at their own expense. My attention to the corps took up a good deal of time; and while it occupied many of the happiest hours of my life, it furnished an additional reason for my reluctance again to encounter the severe course of study indispensable to success in the juridical profession.

On the other hand, my father, whose feelings might have been hurt by my quitting the Bar, had been for two or three years dead, so that I had no control to thwart my own inclination; and my income being equal to all the comforts, and some of the elegancies, of life, I was not pressed to an irksome labour by necessity, that most powerful of motives; consequently, I was the more easily seduced to choose the employment which was most agreeable to me. This was yet the easier, that in 1800 I had obtained the preferment of Sheriff of Selkirkshire, about £300 a-year in value, and which was the more agreeable to me, as in that county I had several friends and relations. But I did not abandon the profession to which I had been educated, without certain prudential resolutions, which, at the risk of some egotism, I will here mention; not without the hope that they may be useful to young persons who may stand in circumstances similar to those in which I then stood.

In the first place, upon considering the lives and fortunes of persons who had given themselves up to literature, or to the task of pleasing the public, it seemed to me that the circumstances which chiefly affected their happiness and character were those from which Horace has bestowed upon authors the epithet of the Irritable Race. It requires no depth of philosophic reflection to perceive, that the petty warfare of Pope with the Dunces of his period could not have been carried on without his suffering the most acute torture, such as a man must endure from mosquitoes, by whose stings he suffers agony, although he can crush them in his grasp by myriads. Nor is it necessary to call to memory the many humiliating instances in which men of the greatest genius have, to avenge some pitiful quarrel, made themselves ridiculous during their lives, to become the still more degraded objects of pity to future times.

Upon the whole, as I had no pretension to the genius of the distinguished persons who had fallen into such errors, I concluded there could be no occasion for imitating them in their mistakes, or what I considered as such; and, in adopting literary pursuits as the principal occupation of my future life, I resolved, if possible, to avoid those weaknesses of temper which seemed to have most easily beset my more celebrated predecessors.

With this view, it was my first resolution to keep as far as was in my power abreast of society, continuing to maintain my place in general company, without yielding to the very natural temptation of narrowing myself to what is called literary society. By doing so, I imagined I should escape the besetting sin of listening to language which, from one motive or other, is apt to ascribe a very undue degree of consequence to literary pursuits, as if they were, indeed, the business rather than the amusement of life. The opposite course can only be compared to the injudicious conduct of one who pampers himself with cordial and luscious draughts, until he is unable to endure wholesome bitters. Like Gil Blas, therefore, I resolved to stick by the society of my *commis*, instead of seeking that of a more literary cast, and to maintain my general interest in what was going on around me, reserving the man of letters for the desk and the library.

My second resolution was a corollary from the first. I determined that, without shutting my ears to the voice of true criticism, I would pay no regard to that which assumes the form of satire. I therefore resolved to arm myself with that triple brass of Horace, of which those of my profession are seldom held deficient, against all the roving warfare of satire, parody, and sarcasm; to laugh if the jest was a good one, or, if otherwise, to let it hum and buzz itself to sleep.

It is to the observance of these rules (according to my best belief) that, after a life of thirty years engaged in literary labours of various kinds, I attribute my never having been entangled in any literary quarrel or controversy; and, which is a still more pleasing result, that I have been distinguished by the personal friendship of my most approved contemporaries of all parties.

I adopted, at the same time, another resolution, on which it may doubtless be remarked, that it was well for me that I had it in my power to do so, and that, therefore, it is a line of conduct which, depending upon accident, can be less generally applicable in other cases. Yet I fail not to record this part of my plan, convinced that, though it may not be in every one's power to adopt exactly the same resolution, he may nevertheless, by his own exertions, in some shape or other, attain the object on which it was founded, namely, to secure the means of subsistence, without relying exclusively on literary talents. In this respect, I determined that literature should be my staff, but not my crutch, and that the profits of my literary labour, however convenient otherwise, should not, if I could help it, become necessary to my ordinary expenses. With this purpose I resolved, if the interest of my friends could so far favour me, to retire upon any of the respectable offices of the law, in which persons of that profession are glad to take refuge, when they feel themselves, or are judged by others, incompetent to aspire to its higher honours. Upon such a post an author might hope to retreat, without any perceptible alteration of circumstances, whenever the time should arrive that the public grew weary of his endeavours to please, or he himself should tire of the pen. At this period of my life, I possessed so many friends capable of assisting me in this object of ambition, that I could hardly overrate my own prospects of obtaining the preferment to which I limited my wishes; and, in fact, I obtained in no long period the reversion of a situation which completely met them.

Thus far all was well, and the author had been guilty, perhaps, of no great imprudence, when he relinquished his forensic practice with the hope of making some figure in the field of literature. But an established character with the public, in my new capacity, still remained to be acquired. I have noticed that the translations from Burger had been unsuccessful, nor had the original poetry which appeared under the auspices of Mr. Lewis, in the "Tales of Wonder," in any great degree raised my reputation. It is true, I had private friends disposed to second me in my efforts to obtain popularity. But I was sportsman enough to know, that if the greyhound does not run well, the halloos of his patrons will obtain nothing for him.

Neither was I ignorant that the practice of ballad-writing was for the present out of fashion, and that any attempt to revive it, or to found a poetical character upon it, would certainly fail of success. The ballad measure itself, which was once listened to as to an enchanting melody, had become hackneyed and sickening, from its being the accompaniment of every grinding hand-organ; and besides, a long work in quatrains, whether those of the common ballad, or such as are termed elegiac, has an effect upon the mind like that of the bed of Procrustes upon the human body; for, as it must be both awkward and difficult to carry on a long sentence from one stanza to another, it follows that the meaning of each period must be comprehended within four lines, and equally so that it must be extended so as to fill that space. The alternate dilation and contraction thus rendered necessary is singularly unfavourable to narrative composition; and the "Gondibert" of Sir William D'Avenant, though containing many striking passages, has never become popular, owing chiefly to its being told in this species of elegiac verse.

In the dilemma occasioned by this objection, the idea occurred to the author of using the measured short line, which forms the structure of so much minstrel poetry, that it may be properly termed the Romantic stanza, by way of distinction; and which appears so natural to our language, that the very best of our poets have not been able to protract it into the verse properly called Heroic, without the use of epithets which are, to say the least, unnecessary. But, on the other hand, the extreme facility of the short couplet, which seems congenial to our language, and was, doubtless for that reason, so popular with our old minstrels, is, for the same reason, apt to prove a snare to the composer who uses it in more modern days, by encouraging him in a habit of slovenly composition. The necessity of occasional pauses often forces the young poet to pay more attention to sense, as the boy's kite rises highest when the train is loaded by a due counterpoise. The author was therefore intimidated by what Byron calls the "fatal facility" of the octo-syllabic verse, which was otherwise better adapted to his purpose of imitating the more anciety poetry.

I was not less at a loss for a subject which might admit of being treated with the simplicity and wildness of the ancient ballad. But accident dictated both a theme and measure, which decided the subject, as well as the structure of the poem.

The lovely young Countess of Dalkeith, afterwards Harriet, Duchess of Buccleuch, had come to the land of her husband with the desire of making herself acquainted with its traditions and customs, as well as its manners and history. All who remember this lady will agree, that the intellectual character of her extreme beauty, the amenity and courtesy of her manners, the soundness of her understanding, and her unbounded benevolence, gave more the idea of an angelic visitant, than of a being belonging to this nether world; and such a thought was but too consistent with the short space she was permitted to tarry among us. Of course, where all made it a pride and pleasure to gratify her wishes, she soon heard enough of Border lore; among others, an aged gentleman of property,† near Langholm, communicated to her ladyship the

† This was Mr. Beattie of Mickledale, a man then considerably upwards of eighty, of a shrewd and sarcastic temper, which he did not at all times suppress, as the following anecdote will show:—A worthy clergyman, now deceased, with better good-will than tact, was endeavouring to push the senior forward in his recollection of Border ballads and legends, by expressing reiterated surprise at his wonderful memory. "No, sir," said old Mickledale; "my memory is good for little, for it cannot retain what ought to be preserved. I can remember all these stories about the auld riding days, which are of no earthly importance; but were you, reverend sir, to repeat your best sermon in this drawing-room, I could not tell you half-an-hour afterwards what you had been speaking about."

story of Gilpin Horner, a tradition in which the narrator, and many more of that country, were firm believers. The young Countess, much delighted with the legend, and the gravity and full confidence with which it was told, enjoined on me a task to compose a ballad on the subject. Of course, to hear was to obey; and thus the goblin story, objected to by several critics as an excrescence upon the poem, was, in fact, the occasion of its being written.

A chance similar to that which dictated the subject, gave me also the hint of a new mode of treating it. We had at that time the lease of a pleasant cottage, near Lasswade, on the romantic banks of the Esk, to which we escaped when the vacations of the Court permitted me so much leisure. Here I had the pleasure to receive a visit from Mr. Stoddart (now Sir John Stoddart, Judge-Advocate at Malta), who was at that time collecting the particulars which he afterwards embodied in his Remarks on Local Scenery in Scotland. I was of some use to him in procuring the information which he desired, and guiding him to the scenes which he wished to see. In return, he made me better acquainted than I had hitherto been with the poetic effusions which have since made the lakes of Westmoreland, and the authors by whom they have been sung, so famous wherever the English tongue is spoken.

I was already acquainted with the "Joan of Arc," the "Thalaba," and the "Metrical Ballads" of Mr. Southey, which had found their way to Scotland, and were generally admired. But Mr. Stoddart, who had the advantage of personal friendship with the authors, and who possessed a strong memory, with an excellent taste, was able to repeat to me many long specimens of their poetry, which had not yet appeared in print. Amongst others, was the striking fragment called Christabel, by Mr. Coleridge, which, from the singularly irregular structure of the stanzas, and the liberty which it allowed the author to adapt the sound to the sense, seemed to be exactly suited to such an extravaganza as I meditated on the subject of Gilpin Horner. As applied to comic and humorous poetry, this mescolanza of measures had been already used by Anthony Hall, Anstey, Dr. Wolcott, and others; but it was in Christabel that I first found it used in serious poetry, and it is to Mr. Coleridge that I am bound to make the acknowledgment due from the pupil to his master. I observe that Lord Byron, in noticing my obligations to Mr. Coleridge, which I have been always most ready to acknowledge, expressed, or was understood to express, a hope that I did not write an unfriendly review on Mr. Coleridge's productions. On this subject I have only to say, that I do not even know the review which is alluded to; and were I ever to take the unbecoming freedom of censuring a man of Mr. Coleridge's extraordinary talents, it would be on account of the caprice and indolence with which he has thrown from him, as if in mere wantonness, those unfinished scraps of poetry, which, like the Torso of antiquity, defy the skill of his poetical brethren to complete them. The charming fragments which the author abandons to their fate, are surely too valuable to be treated like the proofs of careless engravers, the sweepings of whose studios often make the fortune of some painstaking collector.

I did not immediately proceed upon my projected labour, though I was now furnished with a subject, and with a structure of verse which might have the effect of novelty to the public ear, and afford the author an opportunity of varying his measure with the variations of a romantic theme. On the contrary, it was, to the best of my recollection, more than a year after Mr. Stoddart's visit, that, by way of experiment, I composed the first two or three stanzas of "The Lay of the Last Minstrel." I was shortly afterwards visited by two intimate friends, one of whom still survives. They were men whose talents might have raised them to the highest station in literature, had they not preferred exerting them in their own profession of the law, in which they attained equal preferment. I was in the habit of consulting them on my attempts at composition, having equal confidence in their sound taste and friendly sincerity.† In this specimen I had, in the phrase of the Highland servant, packed all that was my own *at least*, for I had also included a line of invocation, a little softened, from Coleridge—

"Mary, mother, shield us well."

As neither of my friends said much to me on the subject of the stanzas I showed them before their departure, I had no doubt that their disgust had been greater than their good-nature chose to express. Looking upon them, therefore, as a failure, I threw the manuscript into the fire, and thought as little more as I could of the matter. Some time afterwards I met one of my two counsellors, who enquired with considerable appearance of interest about the progress of the romance I had commenced, and was greatly surprised at learning its fate. He confessed that neither he nor our mutual friend had been at first able to give a precise opinion on a poem so much out of the common road; but that as they walked home together to the city, they had talked much on the subject, and the result was an earnest desire that I would proceed with the composition. He also added, that some sort of prologue might be necessary, to place the mind of the hearers in the situation to understand and enjoy the poem, and recommended the adoption of such quaint mottoes as Spenser has used to announce the contents of the chapters of the Faery Queen, such as—

"Babe's bloody hands may not be cleansed.
The face of golden Mean:
Her sisters two, Extremities,
Strive her to banish clean."

† One of these, William Erskine, Esq. (Lord Kinnedder), I have often had occasion to mention, and though I may hardly be thanked for disclosing the name of the other, yet I cannot but state that the second is George Cranstoun, Esq., now a Senator of the College of Justice, by the title of Lord Corehouse. 1831.—[Mr. Cranstoun resigned his seat on the bench in 1839.]

I entirely agreed with my friendly critic in the necessity of having some sort of pitch-pipe, which might make readers aware of the object, or rather the tone, of the publication. But I doubted whether, in assuming the oracular style of Spenser's mottoes, the interpreter might not be censured as the harder to be understood of the two. I therefore introduced the Old Minstrel, as an appropriate prolocutor, by whom the Lay might be sung or spoken, and the introduction of whom betwixt the cantos might remind the reader, at intervals, of the time, place, and circumstances of the recitation. This species of *cadre*, or frame, afterwards afforded the poem its name of "The Lay of the Last Minstrel."

The work was subsequently shown to other friends during its progress, and received the *imprimatur* of Mr. Francis Jeffrey, who had been already for some time distinguished by his critical talent.

The poem, being once licensed by the critics as fit for the market, was soon finished, proceeding at about the rate of a canto per week. There was, indeed, little occasion for pause or hesitation, when a troublesome rhyme might be accommodated by an alteration of the stanza, or where an incorrect measure might be remedied by a variation of the rhyme. It was finally published in 1805, and may be regarded as the first work in which the writer, who has been since so voluminous, laid his claim to be considered as an original author.

The book was published by Longman and Company, and Archibald Constable and Company. The principal of the latter firm was then commencing that course of bold and liberal industry which was of so much advantage to his country, and might have been so to himself, but for causes which it is needless to enter into here. The work, brought out on the usual terms of division of profits between the author and publishers, was not long after purchased by them for £500, to which Messrs. Longman and Company afterwards added £100, in their own unsolicited kindness, in consequence of the uncommon success of the work. It was handsomely given to supply the loss of a fine horse, which broke down suddenly while the author was riding with one of the publishers.

It would be great affectation not to own frankly, that the author expected some success from "The Lay of the Last Minstrel." The attempt to return to a more simple and natural style of poetry was likely to be welcomed, at a time when the public had become tired of heroic hexameters, with all the buckram and binding which belong to them of later days. But whatever might have been his expectations, whether moderate or unreasonable, the result left them far behind, for among those who smiled on the adventurous Minstrel were numbered the great names of William Pitt and Charles Fox.† Neither was the extent of the sale inferior to the character of the judges who received the poem with approbation. Upwards of thirty thousand copies of the Lay were disposed of by the trade; and the author had to perform a task difficult to human vanity, when called upon to make the necessary deductions from his own merits, in a calm attempt to account for his popularity.‡

A few additional remarks on the author's literary attempts after this period, will be found in the introduction to the Poem of Marmion.

ABBOTSFORD, *April*, 1830.

† Through what channel or in what terms Fox made known his opinion of the Lay, I have failed to ascertain. Pitt's praise, as expressed to his niece, Lady Hester Stanhope, within a few weeks after the poem appeared, was repeated by her to Mr. William Stewart Rose, who, of course, communicated it forthwith to the author; and not long after, the Minister, in conversation with Scott's early friend, the Right Honourable William Dundas, signified that it would give him pleasure to find some opportunity of advancing the fortunes of such a writer. "I remember," writes this gentleman, "at Mr. Pitt's table in 1805, the Chancellor asked me about you and your then situation, and after I had answered him, Mr. Pitt observed—'He can't remain as he is,' and desired me to 'look to it.'"—LOCKHART. *Life of Scott*, Vol. II. p. 226.

‡ "The poet has under-estimated even the patent and tangible evidence of his success. The first edition of the Lay was a magnificent quarto, 750 copies; but this was soon exhausted, and there followed an octavo impression of 1,500; in 1806, two more, one of 2,000 copies, another of 2,250; in 1807, a fifth edition, of 2,000, and a sixth, of 3,000; in 1808, 3,550; in 1809, 3,000—a small edition in quarto (the ballads and lyrical pieces being then annexed to it)—and another octavo edition of 3,250; in 1811, 3,000; in 1812, 3,000; in 1816, 3,000; in 1823, 1,000. A fourteenth impression of 2,000 foolscap appeared in 1825; and besides all this, before the end of 1836, 11,000 copies had gone forth in the collected editions of his poetical works. Thus, nearly forty-four thousand copies had been disposed of in this country, and by the legitimate trade alone, before he superintended the edition of 1830, to which his biographical introductions were prefixed. In the History of British Poetry nothing had ever equalled the demand for the Lay of the Last Minstrel."—*Life*, Vol. II. p. 226.

THE LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL.

INTRODUCTION.

THE way was long, the wind was cold,
The Minstrel was infirm and old;
His wither'd cheek, and tresses grey,
Seem'd to have known a better day;
The harp, his sole remaining joy,
Was carried by an orphan boy.
The last of all the Bards was he,
Who sung of Border chivalry;
For, well-a-day! their date was fled,
His tuneful brethren all were dead;
And he, neglected and oppress'd,
Wish'd to be with them, and at rest.
No more on prancing palfrey borne,
He caroll'd, light as lark at morn;
No longer courted and caress'd,
High placed in hall, a welcome guest,
He pour'd, to lord and lady gay,
The unpremeditated lay:
Old times were changed, old manners gone;
A stranger fill'd the Stuarts' throne;
The bigots of the iron time
Had call'd his harmless art a crime.
A wandering Harper, scorn'd and poor,
He begg'd his bread from door to door,
And tuned, to please a peasant's ear,
The harp a king had loved to hear.

He pass'd where Newark's stately tower
Looks out from Yarrow's birchen bower:
The Minstrel gazed with wishful eye—
No humbler resting-place was nigh:
With hesitating step at last,
The embattled portal arch he pass'd,
Whose ponderous grate and massy bar
Had oft roll'd back the tide of war,
But never closed the iron door
Against the desolate and poor.
The Duchess† mark'd his weary pace,
His timid mien, and reverend face,
And bade her page the menials tell,
That they should tend the old man well:
For she had known adversity,
Though born in such a high degree;
In pride of power, in beauty's bloom,
Had wept o'er Monmouth's bloody tomb!

When kindness had his wants supplied,
And the old man was gratified,
Began to rise his minstrel pride;
And he began to talk anon,
Of good Earl Francis,† dead and gone,
And of Earl Walter,‡ rest him, God!
A braver ne'er to battle rode;
And how full many a tale he knew,
Of the old warriors of Buccleuch:
And, would the noble Duchess deign
To listen to an old man's strain, [weak,
Though stiff his hand, his voice though
He thought even yet, the sooth to speak,
That, if she loved the harp to hear,
He could make music to her ear.

The humble boon was soon obtain'd;
The aged Minstrel audience gain'd.
But, when he reach'd the room of state,
Where she, with all her ladies, sate,
Perchance he wish'd his boon denied:
For, when to tune his harp he tried,
His trembling hand had lost the ease,
Which marks security to please;
And scenes, long past, of joy and pain,
Came wildering o'er his aged brain—
He tried to tune his harp in vain!
The pitying Duchess praised its chime,
And gave him heart, and gave him time,
Till every string's according glee
Was blended into harmony.
And then, he said, he would full fain
He could recall an ancient strain,
He never thought to sing again.
It was not framed for village churls,
But for high dames and mighty earls;
He had play'd it to King Charles the Good,
When he kept court in Holyrood;

† Anne, Duchess of Buccleuch and Monmouth, representative of the ancient Lords of Buccleuch, and widow of the unfortunate James, Duke of Monmouth, who was beheaded in 1685.

† Francis Scott, Earl of Buccleuch, father of the Duchess.

‡ Walter, Earl of Buccleuch, grandfather of the Duchess, and a celebrated warrior.

And much he wish'd, yet fear'd, to try
The long-forgotten melody.
Amid the strings his fingers stray'd,
And an uncertain warbling made,
And oft he shook his hoary head.
But when he caught the measure wild,
The old man raised his face, and smiled;
And lighten'd up his faded eye,
With all a poet's ecstasy!
In varying cadence, soft or strong,
He swept the sounding chords along:
The present scene, the future lot,
His toils, his wants, were all forgot:
Cold diffidence, and age's frost,
In the full tide of song were lost;
Each blank in faithless memory void,
The poet's glowing thought supplied;
And, while his harp responsive rung,
'Twas thus the LATEST MINSTREL sung.

CANTO FIRST.

I.

THE feast was over in Branksome tower,*
And the Ladye had gone to her secret bower;
Her bower that was guarded by word and spell,
Deadly to hear, and deadly to tell—
Jesu Maria, shield us well!
No living wight, save the Ladye alone,
Had dared to cross the threshold stone.

II.

The tables were drawn, it was idlesse all;
Knight, and page, and household squire,
Loiter'd through the lofty hall,
Or crowded round the ample fire:
The staghounds, weary with the chase,
Lay stretch'd upon the rushy floor,
And urged, in dreams, the forest race,
From Teviot-stone to Eskdale-moor.

III.

Nine-and-twenty knights of fame
Hung their shields in Branksome-Hall;*
Nine-and-twenty squires of name
Brought them their steeds to bower from stall;
Nine-and-twenty yeomen tall
Waited, duteous, on them all:
They were all knights of mettle true,
Kinsmen to the bold Buccleuch.

IV.

Ten of them were sheathed in steel,
With belted sword, and spur on heel:
They quitted not their harness bright,
Neither by day, nor yet by night:
They lay down to rest,
With corslet laced,
Pillow'd on buckler cold and hard;
They carved at the meal
With gloves of steel,
And they drank the red wine through the helmet barr'd.

V.

Ten squires, ten yeomen, mail-clad men,
Waited the beck of the warders ten;
Thirty steeds, both fleet and wight,
Stood saddled in stable day and night,
Barbed with frontlet of steel, I trow,
And with Jedwood-axe at saddlebow;*
A hundred more fed free in stall:—
Such was the custom of Branksome-Hall.

VI.

Why do these steeds stand ready dight?
Why watch these warriors, arm'd, by night?—
They watch, to hear the blood-hound baying:
They watch, to hear the war-horn braying;
To see St. George's red cross streaming,
To see the midnight beacon gleaming:
They watch, against southern force and guile,
Lest Scroop, or Howard, or Percy's powers,
Threaten Branksome's lordly towers,
From Warkwork, or Naworth, or merry Carlisle.*

VII.

Such is the custom of Branksome-Hall.—
Many a valiant knight is here;
But he, the chieftain of them all,
His sword hangs rusting on the wall,
Beside his broken spear.
Bards long shall tell
How Lord Walter fell!*
When startled burghers fled, afar,
The furies of the Border war;
When the streets of high Dunedin†
Saw lances gleam, and falchions redden,
And heard the slogan's‡ deadly yell—
Then the Chief of Branksome fell.

VIII.

Can piety the discord heal,
Or stanch the death-feud's enmity?
Can Christian lore, can patriot zeal,
Can love of blessed charity?
No! vainly to each holy shrine,
In mutual pilgrimage, they drew;
Implored, in vain, the grace divine
For chiefs their own red falchions slew:
While Cessford owns the rule of Carr,
While Ettrick boasts the line of Scott,*
The slaughter'd chiefs, the mortal jar,
The havoc of the feudal war,
Shall never, never be forgot!

* An asterisk in these pages signifies that a note upon the passage is to be found at the end of the volume.

† Edinburgh.

‡ The war-cry, or gathering word, of a Border clan.

IX.

In sorrow o'er Lord Walter's bier
The warlike foresters had bent;
And many a flower, and many a tear,
Old Teviot's maids and matrons lent:
But o'er her warrior's bloody bier
The Ladye dropp'd nor flower nor tear!
Vengeance, deep-brooding o'er the slain,
Had lock'd the source of softer woe;
And burning pride, and high disdain,
Forbade the rising tear to flow;
Until, amid his sorrowing clan,
Her son lisp'd from the nurse's knee—
"And if I live to be a man,
My father's death revenged shall be!"
Then fast the mother's tears did seek
To dew the infant's kindling cheek.

X.

All loose her negligent attire,
All loose her golden hair,
Hung Margaret o'er her slaughter'd sire,
And wept in wild despair:
But not alone the bitter tear
Had filial grief supplied;
For hopeless love, and anxious fear,
Had lent their mingled tide:
Nor in her mother's alter'd eye
Dared she to look for sympathy.
Her lover, 'gainst her father's clan,
With Carr in arms had stood,
When Mathouse-burn to Melrose ran,
All purple with their blood;
And well she knew, her mother dread,
Before Lord Cranstoun she should wed,
Would see her on her dying bed.

XI.

Of noble race the Ladye came,
Her father was a clerk of fame,
Of Bethune's line of Picardie:
He learn'd the art that none may name,
In Padua, far beyond the sea.*
Men said, he changed his mortal frame,
By feat of magic mystery;
For when, in studious mood, he paced
St. Andrew's cloister'd hall,
His form no darkening shadow traced
Upon the sunny wall!*

XII.

And of his skill, as bards avow,
He taught that Ladye fair,
Till to her bidding she could bow
The viewless forms of air.
And now she sits in secret bower,
In old Lord David's western tower,
And listens to a heavy sound,
That moans the mossy turrets round.
Is it the roar of Teviot's tide,
That chafes against the scaur's red side?
Is it the wind that swings the oaks?
Is it the echo from the rocks?
What may it be, the heavy sound, [round?
That moans old Branksome's turrets

XIII.

At the sullen, moaning sound,
The ban-dogs bay and howl;
And, from the turrets round,
Loud whoops the startled owl.
In the hall, both squire and knight
Swore that a storm was near,
And looked forth to view the night;
But the night was still and clear!

XIV.

From the sound of Teviot's tide,
Chafing with the mountain's side,
From the groan of the wind-swung oak,
From the sullen echo of the rock,
From the voice of the coming storm,
The Ladye knew it well!
It was the Spirit of the Flood that spoke,
And he call'd on the Spirit of the Fell.

XV.

RIVER SPIRIT.

"Sleep'st thou, brother?"—

MOUNTAIN SPIRIT.

—"Brother, nay—
On my hills the moonbeams play.
From Craik-cross to Skelfhill-pen,
By every rill, in every glen,
Merry elves their morris pacing,
To aërial minstrelsy,
Emerald rings on brown heath tracing,
Trip it deft and merrily.
Up, and mark their nimble feet!
Up, and list their music sweet!"—

XVI.

RIVER SPIRIT.

"Tears of an imprison'd maiden
Mix with my polluted stream;
Margaret of Branksome, sorrow-laden,
Mourns beneath the moon's pale beam.
Tell me, thou, who view'st the stars,
When shall cease these feudal jars?
What shall be the maiden's fate?
Who shall be the maiden's mate?"—

XVII.

MOUNTAIN SPIRIT.

"Arthur's slow wain his course doth roll,
In utter darkness, round the pole;
The Northern Bear lowers black and grim;
Orion's studded belt is dim;
Twinkling faint, and distant far,
Shimmers through mist each planet star;
Ill may I read their high decree!
But no kind influence deign they shower
On Teviot's tide, and Branksome's tower,
Till pride be quell'd, and love be free."

XVIII.

The unearthly voices ceast,
And the heavy sound was still;

It died on the river's breast,
It died on the side of the hill.
But round Lord David's tower
The sound still floated near;
For it rung in the Ladye's bower,
And it rung in the Ladye's ear.
She raised her stately head, [pride:—
And her heart throbb'd high with
"Your mountains shall bend,
And your streams ascend,
Ere Margaret be our foeman's bride!"

XIX.

The Ladye sought the lofty hall,
Where many a bold retainer lay,
And, with jocund din, among them all,
Her son pursued his infant play.
A fancied moss-trooper, the boy
The truncheon of a spear bestrode,
And round the hall right merrily,
In mimic foray rode.
Even bearded knights, in arms grown old,
Share in his frolic gambols bore,
Albeit their hearts, of rugged mould,
Were stubborn as the steel they wore.
For the grey warriors prophesied,
How the brave boy, in future war,
Should tame the Unicorn's pride,
Exalt the Crescent and the Star.

XX.

The Ladye forgot her purpose high,
One moment, and no more;
One moment gazed with a mother's eye,
As she paused at the archèd door:
Then, from amid the armèd train,
She call'd to her William of Deloraine.

XXI.

A stark moss-trooping Scott was he,
As e'er couch'd Border lance by knee;
Through Solway sands, through Tarras moss,
Blindfold, he knew the paths to cross;
By wily turns, by desperate bounds,
Had baffled Percy's best blood-hounds;*
In Eske or Liddel, fords were none,
But he would ride them, one by one;
Alike to him was time or tide,
December's snow, or July's pride;
Alike to him was tide or time,
Moonless midnight, or matin prime:
Steady of heart, and stout of hand,
As ever drove prey from Cumberland;
Five times outlawèd had he been,
By England's King, and Scotland's Queen.

XXII.

"Sir William of Deloraine, good at need,
Mount thee on the wightest steed;
Spare not to spur, nor stint to ride,
Until thou come to fair Tweedside;
And in Melrose's holy pile
Seek thou the Monk of St. Mary's aisle.
Greet the Father well from me;
Say that the fated hour is come,
And to-night he shall watch with thee,
To win the treasure of the tomb:
For this will be St. Michael's night,
And, though stars be dim, the moon is
And the Cross, of bloody red, [bright;
Will point to the grave of the mighty dead.

XXIII.

"What he gives thee, see thou keep;
Stay not thou for food or sleep:
Be it scroll, or be it book,
Into it, Knight, thou must not look;
If thou readest, thou art lorn!
Better hadst thou ne'er been born!"—

XXIV.

"O swiftly can speed my dapple-grey steed,
Which drinks of the Teviot clear;
Ere break of day," the warrior 'gan say,
"Again will I be here:
And safer by none may thy errand be done,
Than, noble dame, by me;
Letter nor line know I never a one,
Wer't my neck-verse at Hairibee."

XXV.

Soon in his saddle sate he fast,
And soon the steep descent he past,
Soon cross'd the sounding barbican,†
And soon the Teviot side he won.
Eastward the wooded path he rode,
Green hazels o'er his basnet nod;
He pass'd the Peel‡ of Goldiland,
And cross'd old Borthwick's roaring strand;
Dimly he view'd the Moat-hill's mound,
Where Druid shades still flitted round;
In Hawick twinkled many a light;
Behind him soon they set in night;
And soon he spurr'd his courser keen
Beneath the tower of Hazeldean.

XXVI.

The clattering hoofs the watchmen mark;—
"Stand, ho! thou courier of the dark."—
"For Branksome, ho!" the knight rejoin'd,
And left the friendly tower behind.
He turn'd him now from Teviotside,
And, guided by the tinkling rill,
Northward the dark ascent did ride,
And gain'd the moor at Horsliehill;
Broad on the left before him lay,
For many a mile, the Roman way.§

XXVII.

A moment now he slack'd his speed,
A moment breathed his panting steed;

† *Barbican*, the defence of an outer gate of a feudal castle.
‡ *Peel*, a Border tower.
§ An ancient Roman road, crossing through part of Roxburghshire.

Drew saddle-girth and corslet-band,
And loosen'd in the sheath his brand.
On Minto-crags the moonbeams glint,
Where Barnhill hew'd his bed of flint;
Who flung his outlaw'd limbs to rest,
Where falcons hang their giddy nest,
Mid cliffs, from whence his eagle eye
For many a league his prey could spy;
Cliffs, doubling, on their echoes borne,
The terrors of the robber's horn;
Cliffs, which, for many a later year,
The warbling Doric reed shall hear,
When some sad swain shall teach the grove,
Ambition is no cure for love! [grove,

XXVIII.

Unchallenged, thence pass'd Deloraine,
To ancient Riddel's fair domain,
Where Aill, from mountains freed,
Down from the lakes did raving come;
Each wave was crested with tawny foam,
Like the mane of a chestnut steed.
In vain! no torrent, deep or broad,
Might bar the bold moss-trooper's road.

XXIX.

At the first plunge the horse sunk low,
And the water broke o'er the saddlebow;
Above the foaming tide, I ween,
Scarce half the charger's neck was seen;
For he was barded† from counter to tail,
And the rider was arm'd complete in mail;
Never heavier man and horse
Stemm'd a midnight torrent's force.
The warrior's very plume, I say,
Was daggled by the dashing spray;
Yet, through good heart, and Our Ladye's grace,
At length he gain'd the landing-place.

XXX.

Now Bowden Moor the march-man won,
And sternly shook his plumèd head,
As glanced his eye o'er Halidon;‡
For on his soul the slaughter red
Of that unhallow'd morn arose,
When first the Scott and Carr were foes;
When royal James beheld the fray,
Prize to the victor of the day;
When Home and Douglas, in the van,
Bore down Buccleuch's retiring clan,
Till gallant Cessford's heart-blood dear
Reek'd on dark Elliot's Border spear.

XXXI.

In bitter mood he spurrèd fast,
And soon the hated heath was past;
And far beneath, in lustre wan,
Old Melros' rose, and fair Tweed ran:
Like some tall rock with lichens grey,
Seem'd dimly huge, the dark Abbaye.
When Hawick he pass'd, had curfew rung,
Now midnight lauds† were in Melrose sung.
The sound, upon the fitful gale,
In solemn wise did rise and fail,
Like that wild harp, whose magic tone
Is waken'd by the winds alone.
But when Melrose he reach'd, 'twas silence all;
He meetly stabled his steed in stall,
And sought the convent's lonely wall.*

HERE paused the harp; and with its swell
The Master's fire and courage fell;
Dejectedly, and low, he bow'd,
And, gazing timid on the crowd,
He seem'd to seek, in every eye,
If they approved his ministrelsy;
And, diffident of present praise,
Somewhat he spoke of former days,
And how old age, and wand'ring long,
Had done his hand and harp some wrong.
The Duchess, and her daughters fair,
And every gentle lady there,
Each after each, in due degree,
Gave praises to his melody;
His hand was true, his voice was clear,
And much they long'd the rest to hear.
Encouraged thus, the Aged Man,
After meet rest, again began.

CANTO SECOND.

I.

IF thou would'st view fair Melrose aright,
Go visit it by the pale moonlight;
For the gay beams of lightsome day
Gild, but to flout, the ruins grey.
When the broken arches are black in night,
And each shafted oriel glimmers white;
When the cold light's uncertain shower
Streams on the ruin'd central tower;
When buttress and buttress, alternately,
Seem framed of ebon and ivory;
When silver edges the imagery, [die;
And the scrolls that teach thee to live and
When distant Tweed is heard to rave,
And the owlet to hoot o'er the dead man's
Then go—but go alone the while— [grave,
Then view St. David's ruin'd pile;*
And, home returning, soothly swear,
Was never scene so sad and fair!

II.

Short halt did Deloraine make there;
Little reck'd he of the scene so fair;
With dagger's hilt, on the wicket strong,
He struck full loud, and struck full long.

---

† *Barded*, or barbed,—applied to a horse accoutred with defensive armour.

‡ An ancient seat of the Kerrs of Cessford, now demolished.

† *Lauds*, the midnight service of the Catholic church.

The porter hurried to the gate— [late?"
"Who knocks so loud, and knocks so
"From Branksome I," the warrior cried;
And straight the wicket open'd wide:
For Branksome's Chiefs had in battle stood
To fence the rights of fair Melrose;
And lands and livings, many a rood,
Had gifted the shrine for their souls' repose.

III.

Bold Deloraine his errand said;
The porter bent his humble head;
With torch in hand, and feet unshod,
And noiseless step, the path he trod;
The archèd cloister, far and wide,
Rang to the warrior's clanking stride,
Till, stooping low his lofty crest,
He enter'd the cell of the ancient priest,
And lifted his barrèd aventayle,†
To hail the Monk of St. Mary's aisle.

IV.

"The Ladye of Branksome greets thee by me;
Says, that the fated hour is come,
And that to-night I shall watch with thee,
To win the treasure of the tomb."
From sackcloth couch the Monk arose,
With toil his stiffen'd limbs he rear'd;
A hundred years had flung their snows
On his thin locks and floating beard.

V.

And strangely on the Knight look'd he,
And his blue eyes gleam'd wild and wide;
"And darest thou, Warrior! seek to see
What heaven and hell alike would hide?
My breast, in belt of iron pent,
With shirt of hair and scourge of thorn;
For threescore years, in penance spent,
My knees those flinty stones have worn;
Yet all too little to atone
For knowing what should ne'er be known.
Would'st thou thy every future year
In ceaseless prayer and penance drie,
Yet wait thy latter end with fear—
Then, daring Warrior, follow me!"—

VI.

"Penance, father, will I none;
Prayer know I hardly one;
For mass or prayer can I rarely tarry,
Save to patter an Ave Mary,
When I ride on a Border foray.
Other prayer can I none; [gone."—
So speed me my errand, and let me be

VII.

Again on the Knight look'd the Church-man old,
And again he sighed heavily;
For he had himself been a warrior bold,
And fought in Spain and Italy.

† *Aventayle*, visor of the helmet.

And he thought on the days that were long since by, [courage was high:—
When his limbs were strong, and his
Now, slow and faint, he led the way,
Where, cloister'd round, the garden lay;
The pillar'd arches were over their head,
And beneath their feet were the bones of the dead.

VIII.

Spreading herbs, and flowerets bright,
Glisten'd with the dew of night;
Nor herb, nor floweret, glisten'd there,
But was carved in the cloister-arches as fair. [moon,
The Monk gazed long on the lovely
Then into the night he looked forth;
And red and bright the streamers light
Were dancing in the glowing north.
So had he seen, in fair Castile, [start;
The youth in glittering squadrons
Sudden the flying jennet wheel,
And hurl the unexpected dart.
He knew, by the streamers that shot so bright,
That spirits were riding the northern light.

IX.

By a steel-clenched postern door,
They enter'd now the chancel tall;
The darken'd roof rose high aloof
On pillars lofty and light and small:
The key-stone, that lock'd each ribbèd aisle,
Was a fleur-de-lys, or a quatre-feuille;
The corbells† were carved grotesque and grim; [trim,
And the pillars, with cluster'd shafts so
With base and with capital flourish'd around, [had bound.
Seem'd bundles of lances which garlands

X.

Full many a scutcheon and banner riven,
Shook to the cold night-wind of heaven,
Around the screened altar's pale;
And there the dying lamps did burn,
Before thy low and lonely urn,
O gallant Chief of Otterburne!*
And thine, dark Knight of Liddesdale!*
O fading honours of the dead!
O high ambition, lowly laid!

XI.

The moon on the east oriel shone
Through slender shafts of shapely stone,
By foliaged tracery combined; [hand
Thou would'st have thought some fairy's
'Twixt poplars straight the ozier wand,
In many a freakish knot, had twined;

† *Corbells*, the projections from which the arches spring, usually cut in a fantastic face, or mask.

Then framed a spell, when the work was done,
And changed the willow wreaths to stone.
The silver light, so pale and faint,
Show'd many a prophet, and many a saint,
Whose image on the glass was dyed;
Full in the midst, his Cross of Red
Triumphant Michael brandished,
And trampled the Apostate's pride.
The moonbeam kiss'd the holy pane,
And threw on the pavement a bloody stain.

XII.

They sate them down on a marble stone
(A Scottish monarch slept below);
Thus spoke the Monk, in solemn tone:—
"I was not always a man of woe;
For Paynim countries I have trod,
And fought beneath the Cross of God:
Now, strange to my eyes thine arms appear,
And their iron clang sounds strange to my ear.

XIII.

"In these far climes it was my lot
To meet the wondrous Michael Scott;*
A wizard, of such dreaded fame,
That when, in Salamanca's cave,
Him listed his magic wand to wave,
The bells would ring in Notre Dame!
Some of his skill he taught to me;
And, Warrior, I could say to thee
The words that cleft Eildon hills in three,*
And bridled the Tweed with a curb of stone:
But to speak them were a deadly sin;
And for having but thought them my heart within,
A treble penance must be done.

XIV.

"When Michael lay on his dying bed,
His conscience was awakened:
He bethought him of his sinful deed,
And he gave me a sign to come with speed.
I was in Spain when the morning rose,
But I stood by his bed ere evening close.
The words may not again be said,
That he spoke to me, on death-bed laid;
They would rend this Abbaye's massy nave,
And pile it in heaps above his grave.

XV.

"I swore to bury his Mighty Book,
That never mortal might therein look;
And never to tell where it was hid,
Save at his Chief of Branksome's need:
And when that need was past and o'er,
Again the volume to restore.
I buried him on St. Michael's night,
When the bell toll'd one, and the moon was bright,
And I dug his chamber among the dead,
When the floor of the chancel was stained red,
That his patron's cross might over him wave,
And scare the fiends from the Wizard's grave.

XVI.

"It was a night of woe and dread,
When Michael in the tomb I laid!
Strange sounds along the chancel pass'd,
The banners waved without a blast"—
—Still spoke the Monk, when the bell toll'd one!—
I tell you, that a braver man
Than William of Deloraine, good at need,
Against a foe ne'er spurr'd a steed;
Yet somewhat was he chill'd with dread,
And his hair did bristle upon his head.

XVII.

"Lo, Warrior! now the Cross of Red
Points to the grave of the mighty dead;
Within it burns a wondrous light,
To chase the spirits that love the night.
That lamp shall burn unquenchably,
Until the eternal doom shall be."—
Slow moved the Monk to the broad flagstone,
Which the bloody Cross was traced upon:
He pointed to a secret nook;
An iron bar the Warrior took;
And the Monk made a sign with his wither'd hand,
The grave's huge portal to expand.

XVIII.

With beating heart to the task he went;
His sinewy frame o'er the grave-stone bent;
With bar of iron heaved amain,
Till the toil-drops fell from his brows, like rain.
It was by dint of passing strength,
That he moved the massy stone at length.
I would you had been there, to see
How the light broke forth so gloriously,
Stream'd upward to the chancel roof,
And through the galleries far aloof!
No earthly flame blazed e'er so bright:
It shone like heaven's own blessed light,
And, issuing from the tomb,
Show'd the Monk's cowl, and visage pale,
Danced on the dark-brow'd Warrior's mail,
And kiss'd his waving plume.

XIX.

Before their eyes the Wizard lay,
As if he had not been dead a day.
His hoary beard in silver roll'd,
He seem'd some seventy winters old;
A palmer's amice wrapp'd him round,
With a wrought Spanish baldric bound,
Like a pilgrim from beyond the sea:
His left hand held his Book of Might;
A silver cross was in his right;
The lamp was placed beside his knee:

High and majestic was his look,
At which the fellest fiend had shook,
And all unruffled was his face:
They trusted his soul had gotten grace.

XX.

Often had William of Deloraine
Rode through the battle's bloody plain,
And trampled down the warriors slain,
And neither known remorse nor awe;
Yet now remorse and awe he own'd;
His breath came thick, his head swam round,
When this strange scene of death he saw,
Bewilder'd and unnerved he stood,
And the priest pray'd fervently and loud:
With eyes averted prayèd he;
He might not endure the sight to see,
Of the man he had loved so brotherly.

XXI.

And when the priest his death-prayer had
Thus unto Deloraine he said:— [pray'd,
"Now, speed thee what thou hast to do,
Or, Warrior, we may dearly rue;
For those, thou may'st not look upon,
Are gathering fast round the yawning stone!"
Then Deloraine, in terror, took
From the cold hand the Mighty Book,
With iron clasp'd, and with iron bound:
He thought, as he took it, the dead man frown'd;
But the glare of the sepulchral light,
Perchance, had dazzled the warrior's sight.

XXII.

When the huge stone sunk o'er the tomb,
The night return'd in double gloom;
For the moon had gone down, and the stars were few;
And, as the Knight and Priest withdrew,
With wavering steps and dizzy brain,
They hardly might the postern gain.
'Tis said, as through the aisles they pass'd,
They heard strange noises on the blast;
And through the cloister-galleries small,
Which at mid-height thread the chancel wall,
Loud sobs, and laughter louder, ran,
And voices unlike the voice of man;
As if the fiends kept holiday,
Because these spells were brought to day.
I cannot tell how the truth may be;
I say the tale as 'twas said to me.

XXIII.

"Now, hie thee hence," the Father said,
"And when we are on death-bed laid,
O may our dear Ladye, and sweet St. John,
Forgive our souls for the deed we have done!"
The Monk return'd him to his cell,
And many a prayer and penance sped;
When the convent met at the noontide bell—
The Monk of St. Mary's aisle was dead!
Before the cross was the body laid,
With hands clasp'd fast, as if still he pray'd.

XXIV.

The Knight breathed free in the morning wind,
And strove his hardihood to find:
He was glad when he pass'd the tomb-stones grey,
Which girdle round the fair Abbaye;
For the mystic Book, to his bosom prest,
Felt like a load upon his breast;
And his joints, with nerves of iron twined,
Shook, like the aspen leaves in wind.
Full fain was he when the dawn of day
Began to brighten Cheviot grey;
He joy'd to see the cheerful light, [might.
And he said Ave Mary, as well as he

XXV.

The sun had brighten'd Cheviot grey,
The sun had brighten'd the Carter's† side;
And soon beneath the rising day
Smiled Branksome towers and Teviot's tide.
The wild birds told their warbling tale,
And waken'd every flower that blows;
And peepèd forth the violet pale,
And spread her breast the mountain rose.
And lovelier than the rose so red,
Yet paler than the violet pale,
She early left her sleepless bed,
The fairest maid of Teviotdale.

XXVI.

Why does fair Margaret so early awake,
And don her kirtle so hastilie;
And the silken knots, which in hurry she would make,
Why tremble her slender fingers to tie;
Why does she stop, and look often around,
As she glides down the secret stair;
And why does she pat the shaggy blood-hound,
As she rouses him up from his lair;
And, though she passes the postern alone,
Why is not the watchman's bugle blown?

XXVII.

The Ladye steps in doubt and dread,
Lest her watchful mother hear her tread;
The Ladye caresses the rough blood-hound, [round;
Lest his voice should waken the castle
The watchman's bugle is not blown,
For he was her foster-father's son;
And she glides through the greenwood at dawn of light
To meet Baron Henry, her own true knight.

† A mountain on the Border of England, above Jedburgh.

XXVIII.

The Knight and Ladye fair are met,
And under the hawthorn's boughs are set.
A fairer pair were never seen
To meet beneath the hawthorn green.
He was stately, and young, and tall;
Dreaded in battle, and loved in hall:
And she, when love, scarce told, scarce
Lent to her cheek a livelier red; [hid,
When the half sigh her swelling breast
Against the silken ribbon prest;
When her blue eyes their secret told,
Though shaded by her locks of gold—
Where would you find the peerless fair,
With Margaret of Branksome might compare?

XXIX.

And now, fair dames, methinks I see
You listen to my minstrelsy;
Your waving locks ye backward throw,
And sidelong bend your necks of snow:
Ye weep to hear a melting tale,
Of two true lovers in a dale;
And how the Knight, with tender fire,
To paint his faithful passion strove;
Swore he might at her feet expire,
But never, never cease to love;
And how she blush'd and how she sigh'd,
And, half consenting, half denied,
And said that she would die a maid;—
Yet, might the bloody feud be stay'd,
Henry of Cranstoun, and only he,
Margaret of Branksome's choice should be.

XXX.

Alas! fair dames, your hopes are vain!
My harp has lost the enchanting strain;
Its lightness would my age reprove:
My hairs are grey, my limbs are old,
My heart is dead, my veins are cold:
I may not, must not, sing of love.

XXXI.

Beneath an oak, moss'd o'er by eld,
The Baron's Dwarf his courser held,*
And held his crested helm and spear:
That Dwarf was scarce an earthly man,
If the tales were true that of him ran
Through all the Border, far and near.
'Twas said, when the Baron a-hunting rode, [trode,
Through Reedsdale's glens, but rarely
He heard a voice cry, "Lost! lost! lost!"
And, like tennis-ball by racket toss'd,
A leap, of thirty feet and three,
Made from the gorse this elfin shape,
Distorted like some dwarfish ape,
And lighted at Lord Cranstoun's knee.
Lord Cranstoun was some whit dismay'd;
'Tis said that five good miles he rade,
To rid him of his company;
But where he rode one mile, the Dwarf ran four,
And the Dwarf was first at the castle door.

XXXII.

Use lessens marvel, it is said:
This elvish Dwarf with the Baron staid;
Little he ate, and less he spoke,
Nor mingled with the menial flock:
And oft apart his arms he toss'd,
And often mutter'd "Lost! lost! lost!"
He was waspish, arch, and litherlie,
But well Lord Cranstoun serv'd he:
And he of his service was full fain;
For once he had been ta'en or slain,
An it had not been for his ministry.
All between Home and Hermitage,
Talk'd of Lord Cranstoun's Goblin-Page.

XXXIII.

For the Baron went on Pilgrimage,
And took with him this elvish Page,
To Mary's Chapel of the Lowes:
For there, beside our Ladye's lake,
An offering he had sworn to make,
And he would pay his vows.
But the Ladye of Branksome gather'd band [mand,
Of the best that would ride at her com-
The trysting-place was Newark Lee.
Wat of Harden came thither amain,
And thither came John of Thirlestane,
And thither came William of Deloraine;
They were three hundred spears and three. [stream,
Through Douglas-burn, up Yarrow
Their horses prance, their lances gleam.
They came to St. Mary's lake ere day;
But the chapel was void, and the Baron away.
They burn'd the chapel for very rage,
And cursed Lord Cranstoun's Goblin-Page.

XXXIV.

And now, in Branksome's good green-wood,
As under the aged oak he stood,
The Baron's courser pricks his ears,
As if a distant noise he hears.
The Dwarf waves his long lean arm on high,
And signs to the lovers to part and fly:
No time was then to vow or sigh.
Fair Margaret through the hazel grove,
Flew like the startled cushat-dove:†
The Dwarf the stirrup held and rein;
Vaulted the Knight on his steed amain,
And, pondering deep that morning's scene, [green.
Rode eastward through the hawthorns

† Wood-pigeon.

WHILE thus he pour'd the lengthen'd tale,
The Minstrel's voice began to fail:
Full slyly smiled the observant page,
And gave the wither'd hand of age
A goblet, crown'd with mighty wine,
The blood of Velez' scorchèd vine.
He raised the silver cup on high,
And, while the big drop fill'd his eye,
Pray'd God to bless the Duchess long,
And all who cheer'd a son of song.
The attending maidens smiled to see
How long, how deep, how zealously,
The precious juice the Minstrel quaff'd;
And he, embolden'd by the draught,
Look'd gaily back to them, and laugh'd.
The cordial nectar of the bowl
Swell'd his old veins, and cheer'd his soul;
A lighter, livelier prelude ran,
Ere thus his tale again began.

CANTO THIRD.

I.

AND said I that my limbs were old,
And said I that my blood was cold,
And that my kindly fire was fled,
And my poor wither'd heart was dead,
And that I might not sing of love?—
How could I, to the dearest theme
That ever warm'd a minstrel's dream,
So foul, so false a recreant prove!
How could I name love's very name,
Nor wake my heart to notes of flame!

II.

In peace, Love tunes the shepherd's reed;
In war, he mounts the warrior's steed;
In halls, in gay attire is seen;
In hamlets, dances on the green.
Love rules the court, the camp, the grove,
And men below, and saints above;
For love is heaven, and heaven is love.

III.

So thought Lord Cranstoun, as I ween,
While, pondering deep the tender scene,
He rode through Branksome's hawthorn green.
But the Page shouted wild and shrill,
And scarce his helmet could he don,
When downward from the shady hill
A stately knight came pricking on.
That warrior's steed, so dapple-grey,
Was dark with sweat, and splash'd with clay;
His armour red with many a stain:
He seem'd in such a weary plight,
As if he had ridden the live-long night;
For it was William of Deloraine.

IV.

But no whit weary did he seem,
When, dancing in the sunny beam,
He mark'd the crane on the Baron's crest;†
For his ready spear was in his rest.
Few were the words, and stern and high,
That mark'd the foemen's feudal hate;
For question fierce, and proud reply,
Gave signal soon of dire debate.
Their very coursers seem'd to know
That each was other's mortal foe,
And snorted fire, when wheel'd around,
To give each knight his vantage-ground.

V.

In rapid round the Baron bent;
He sigh'd a sigh, and pray'd a prayer;
The prayer was to his patron saint,
The sigh was to his ladye fair.
Stout Deloraine nor sigh'd nor pray'd,
Nor saint, nor ladye, call'd to aid;
But he stoop'd his head, and couch'd his spear,
And spurr'd his steed to full career.
The meeting of these champions proud
Seem'd like the bursting thunder-cloud.

VI.

Stern was the dint the Borderer lent!
The stately Baron backwards bent;
Bent backwards to his horse's tail,
And his plumes went scattering on the gale:
The tough ash spear, so stout and true,
Into a thousand flinders flew.
But Cranstoun's lance, of more avail,
Pierced through, like silk, the Borderer's mail;
Through shield, and jack, and acton, past,
Deep in his bosom broke at last.—
Still sate the warrior, saddle-fast,
Till, stumbling in the mortal shock,
Down went the steed, the girthing broke,
Hurl'd on a heap lay man and horse.
The Baron onward pass'd his course;
Nor knew—so giddy roll'd his brain—
His foe lay stretch'd upon the plain.

VII.

But when he rein'd his courser round,
And saw his foeman on the ground
Lie senseless as the bloody clay,
He bade his page to stanch the wound,
And there beside the warrior stay,
And tend him in his doubtful state,
And lead him to Branksome castle-gate:
His noble mind was inly moved
For the kinsman of the maid he loved.
"This shalt thou do without delay:
No longer here myself may stay;
Unless the swifter I speed away,
Short shrift will be at my dying day."

† The crest of the Cranstouns, in allusion to their name, is a crane dormant, holding a stone in his foot, with an emphatic Border motto, *Thou shalt want ere I want.*

VIII.

Away in speed Lord Cranstoun rode ;
The Goblin-Page behind abode ;
His lord's command he ne'er withstood,
Though small his pleasure to do good.
As the corslet off he took,
The Dwarf espied the Mighty Book !
Much he marvell'd a knight of pride,
Like a book-bosom'd priest should ride :
He thought not to search or stanch the wound,
Until the secret he had found.

IX.

The iron band, the iron clasp,
Resisted long the elfin grasp :
For when the first he had undone,
It closed as he the next begun.
Those iron clasps, that iron band,
Would not yield to unchristen'd hand,
Till he smear'd the cover o'er
With the Borderer's curdled gore ;
A moment then the volume spread,
And one short spell therein he read,
It had much of glamour† might,
Could make a ladye seem a knight ;
The cobwebs on a dungeon wall
Seem tapestry in lordly hall ;
A nut-shell seem a gilded barge,
A sheeling‡ seem a palace large,
And youth seem age, and age seem youth—
All was delusion, nought was truth.*

X.

He had not read another spell,
When on his cheek a buffet fell,
So fierce, it stretch'd him on the plain,
Beside the wounded Deloraine.
From the ground he rose dismay'd,
And shook his huge and matted head ;
One word he mutter'd, and no more,
"Man of age, thou smitest sore !"—
No more the Elfin Page durst try
Into the wondrous Book to pry ;
The clasps, though smear'd with Christian gore,
Shut faster than they were before.
He hid it underneath his cloak.—
Now, if you ask who gave the stroke,
I cannot tell, so mot I thrive ;
It was not given by man alive.

XI.

Unwillingly himself he address'd
To do his master's high behest :
He lifted up the living corse,
And laid it on the weary horse ;
He led him into Branksome Hall,
Before the beards of the warders all ;
And each did after swear and say,
There only pass'd a wain of hay.
He took him to Lord David's tower,
Even to the Ladye's secret bower ;
And, but that stronger spells were spread,
And the door might not be openèd,
He had laid him on her very bed.
Whate'er he did of gramarye,†
Was always done maliciously ;
He flung the warrior on the ground,
And the blood well'd freshly from the wound.

XII.

As he repass'd the outer court,
He spied the fair young child at sport :
He thought to train him to the wood ;
For, at a word, be it understood,
He was always for ill, and never for good.
Seem'd to the boy, some comrade gay
Led him forth to the woods to play ;
On the drawbridge the warders stout
Saw a terrier and lurcher passing out.

XIII.

He led the boy o'er bank and fell,
Until they came to a woodland brook ;
The running stream dissolved the spell,*
And his own elvish shape he took.
Could he have had his pleasure vilde,
He had crippled the joints of the noble child ;
Or, with his fingers long and lean,
Had strangled him in fiendish spleen :
But his awful mother he had in dread,
And also his power was limited ;
So he but scowl'd on the startled child,
And darted through the forest wild ;
The woodland brook he bounding cross'd,
And laugh'd, and shouted, "Lost ! lost ! lost !"—

XIV.

Full sore amazed at the wondrous change,
And frighten'd as a child might be,
At the wild yell and visage strange,
And the dark words of gramarye,
The child, amidst the forest bower,
Stood rooted like a lily flower ;
And when at length, with trembling pace,
He sought to find where Branksome lay,
He fear'd to see that grisly face
Glare from some thicket on his way.
Thus, starting oft, he journey'd on,
And deeper in the wood is gone,—
For aye the more he sought his way,
The farther still he went astray,—
Until he heard the mountains round
Ring to the baying of a hound.

XV.

And hark ! and hark ! the deep-mouth'd bark
Comes nigher still, and nigher :
Bursts on the path a dark blood-hound,
His tawny muzzle track'd the ground,
And his red eye shot fire.

† Magical delusion. ‡ A shepherd's hut.

† Magic.

Soon as the wilder'd child saw he,
He flew at him right furiouslie.
I ween you would have seen with joy
The bearing of the gallant boy,
When, worthy of his noble sire,
His wet cheek glow'd 'twixt fear and ire!
He faced the blood-hound manfully,
And held his little bat on high;
So fierce he struck, the dog, afraid,
At cautious distance hoarsely bay'd,
But still in act to spring;
When dash'd an archer through the glade,
And when he saw the hound was stay'd,
He drew his tough bow-string;
But a rough voice cried, "Shoot not, boy!
Ho! shoot not, Edward—'Tis a boy!"

XVI.

The speaker issued from the wood,
And check'd his fellow's surly mood,
And quell'd the ban-dog's ire:
He was an English yeoman good,
And born in Lancashire.
Well could he hit a fallow-deer
Five hundred feet him fro;
With hand more true, and eye more clear,
No archer bended bow.
His coal-black hair, shorn round and close,
Set off his sun-burn'd face:
Old England's sign, St. George's cross,
His barret-cap did grace;
His bugle-horn hung by his side,
All in a wolf-skin baldric tied;
And his short falchion, sharp and clear,
Had pierced the throat of many a deer.

XVII.

His kirtle, made of forest green,
Reach'd scantly to his knee;
And, at his belt, of arrows keen
A furbish'd sheaf bore he;
His buckler, scarce in breadth a span,
No larger fence had he;
He never counted him a man,
Would strike below the knee:*
His slacken'd bow was in his hand,
And the leash, that was his blood-hound's band.

XVIII.

He would not do the fair child harm,
But held him with his powerful arm,
That he might neither fight nor flee;
For when the Red Cross spied he,
The boy strove long and violently.
"Now, by St. George," the archer cries,
"Edward, methinks we have a prize!
This boy's fair face, and courage free,
Show he is come of high degree."

XIX.

"Yes! I am come of high degree,
For I am the heir of bold Buccleuch:
And, if thou dost not set me free,
False Southron, thou shalt dearly rue!
For Walter of Harden shall come with speed,
And William of Deloraine, good at need,
And every Scott, from Esk to Tweed;
And, if thou dost not let me go,
Despite thy arrows, and thy bow,
I'll have thee hang'd to feed the crow!"

XX.

"Gramercy, for thy good-will, fair boy!
My mind was never set so high;
But if thou art chief of such a clan,
And art the son of such a man,
And ever comest to thy command,
Our wardens had need to keep good order;
My bow of yew to a hazel wand,
Thou'lt make them work upon the Border.
Meantime, be pleased to come with me,
For good Lord Dacre shalt thou see;
I think our work is well begun,
When we have taken thy father's son."

XXI.

Although the child was led away,
In Branksome still he seem'd to stay,
For so the Dwarf his part did play;
And, in the shape of that young boy,
He wrought the castle much annoy.
The comrades of the young Buccleuch
He pinch'd, and beat, and overthrew;
Nay, some of them he well-nigh slew.
He tore Dame Maudlin's silken tire,
And, as Sym Hall stood by the fire,
He lighted the match of his bandelier,†
And wofully scorch'd the hackbuteer.‡
It may be hardly thought or said,
The mischief that the urchin made,
Till many of the castle guess'd
That the young Baron was possess'd!

XXII.

Well I ween the charm he held
The noble Ladye had soon dispell'd;
But she was deeply busied then
To tend the wounded Deloraine.
Much she wonder'd to find him lie,
On the stone threshold stretch'd along;
She thought some spirit of the sky
Had done the bold moss-trooper wrong;
Because, despite her precept dread,
Perchance he in the Book had read;
But the broken lance in his bosom stood,
And it was earthly steel and wood.

XXIII.

She drew the splinter from the wound,
And with a charm she stanch'd the blood;
She bade the gash be cleansed and bound:
No longer by his couch she stood;

† *Bandelier*, belt for carrying ammunition.
‡ *Hackbuteer*, musketeer.

But she has ta'en the broken lance,
And wash'd it from the clotted gore,
And salved the splinter o'er and o'er.
William of Deloraine, in trance,
Whene'er she turn'd it round and round,
Twisted as if she gall'd his wound.
Then to her maidens she did say,
That he should be whole man and sound,
Within the course of a night and day.
Full long she toil'd; for she did rue
Mishap to friend so stout and true.

XXIV.

So pass'd the day—the evening fell,
'Twas near the time of curfew bell;
The air was mild, the wind was calm,
The stream was smooth, the dew was balm;
E'en the rude watchman, on the tower,
Enjoy'd and bless'd the lovely hour.
Far more fair Margaret loved and bless'd
The hour of silence and of rest.
On the high turret sitting lone,
She waked at times the lute's soft tone;
Touch'd a wild note, and all between
Thought of the bower of hawthorns green.
Her golden hair stream'd free from band,
Her fair cheek rested on her hand,
Her blue eyes sought the west afar,
For lovers love the western star.

XXV.

Is yon the star, o'er Penchryst Pen,
That rises slowly to her ken,
And, spreading broad its wavering light,
Shakes its loose tresses on the night?
Is yon red glare the western star?—
Oh! 'tis the beacon-blaze of war!
Scarce could she draw her breath,
For well she knew the fire of death!

XXVI.

The Warder view'd it blazing strong,
And blew his war-note loud and long,
Till, at the high and haughty sound,
Rock, wood, and river rung around.
The blast alarm'd the festal hall,
And startled forth the warriors all;
Far downward, in the castle-yard,
Full many a torch and cresset glared;
And helms and plumes, confusedly toss'd,
Were in the blaze half-seen, half-lost;
And spears in wild disorder shook,
Like reeds beside a frozen brook.

XXVII.

The Seneschal, whose silver hair
Was redden'd by the torches' glare,
Stood in the midst, with gesture proud,
And issued forth his mandates loud:—
"On Penchryst glows a bale* of fire,
And three are kindling on Priesthaugh-swire;
Ride out, ride out,
The foe to scout!
Mount, mount for Branksome, every man!
Thou, Todrig, warn the Johnstone clan,
That ever are true and stout—
Ye need not send to Liddesdale;
For when they see the blazing bale,
Elliots and Armstrongs never fail.—
Ride, Alton, ride, for death and life!
And warn the Warder of the strife.
Young Gilbert, let our beacon blaze,
Our kin, and clan, and friends to raise."

XXVIII.

Fair Margaret, from the turret head,
Heard, far below, the coursers' tread,
While loud the harness rung,
As to their seats, with clamour dread,
The ready horsemen sprung:
And trampling hoofs, and iron coats,
And leaders' voices, mingled notes,
And out! and out!
In hasty route,
The horsemen gallop'd forth;
Dispersing to the south to scout,
And east, and west, and north,
To view their coming enemies,
And warn their vassals and allies.

XXIX.

The ready page, with hurried hand,
Awaked the need-fire's† slumbering brand,
And ruddy blush'd the heaven:
For a sheet of flame, from the turret high,
Waved like a blood-flag on the sky,
All flaring and uneven;
And soon a score of fires, I ween,
From height, and hill, and cliff, were seen;
Each with warlike tidings fraught;
Each from each the signal caught;
Each after each they glanced to sight,
As stars arise upon the night.
They gleam'd on many a dusky tarn,‡
Haunted by the lonely earn;§
On many a cairn's* grey pyramid,
Where urns of mighty chiefs lie hid;
Till high Dunedin the blazes saw,
From Soltra and Dumpender Law;
And Lothian heard the Regent's order,
That all should bowne‖ them for the Border.

XXX.

The livelong night in Branksome rang
The ceaseless sound of steel;
The castle-bell, with backward clang,
Sent forth the larum peal;
Was frequent heard the heavy jar,
Where massy stone and iron bar

† *Need-fire*, beacon.
‡ *Tarn*, a mountain lake.
§ *Earn*, a Scottish eagle.
‖ *Bowne*, make ready.

Were piled on echoing keep and tower,
To whelm the foe with deadly shower;
Was frequent heard the changing guard,
And watch-word from the sleepless ward;
While, wearied by the endless din,
Blood-hound and ban-dog yell'd within.

XXXI.

The noble Dame, amid the broil,
Shared the grey Seneschal's high toil,
And spoke of danger with a smile; [sage
Cheer'd the young knights, and council
Held with the chiefs of riper age.
No tidings of the foe were brought,
Nor of his numbers knew they aught,
Nor what in time of truce he sought.
Some said that there were thousands ten;
And others ween'd that it was nought
But Leven Clans, or Tynedale men,
Who came to gather in black-mail;†
And Liddesdale, with small avail,
Might drive them lightly back agen.
So pass'd the anxious night away,
And welcome was the peep of day.

CEASED the high sound—the listening throng
Applaud the Master of the Song;
And marvel much, in helpless age,
So hard should be his pilgrimage.
Had he no friend—no daughter dear,
His wandering toil to share and cheer;
No son to be his father's stay,
And guide him on the rugged way?
"Ay, once he had—but he was dead!"
Upon the harp he stoop'd his head,
And busied himself the strings withal,
To hide the tear that fain would fall.
In solemn measure, soft and slow,
Arose a father's notes of woe.

CANTO FOURTH.

I.

SWEET Teviot! on thy silver tide
The glaring bale-fires blaze no more;
No longer steel-clad warriors ride
Along thy wild and willow'd shore;
Where'er thou wind'st, by dale or hill,
All, all is peaceful, all is still,
As if thy waves, since Time was born,
Since first they roll'd upon the Tweed,
Had only heard the shepherd's reed,
Nor started at the bugle-horn.

II.

Unlike the tide of human time, [flow,
Which, though it change in ceaseless
Retains each grief, retains each crime
Its earliest course was doom'd to know;
And, darker as it downward bears,
Is stain'd with past and present tears.
Low as that tide has ebb'd with me,
It still reflects to Memory's eye
The hour my brave, my only boy,
Fell by the side of great Dundee.*
Why, when the volleying musket play'd
Against the bloody Highland blade,
Why was I not beside him laid?—
Enough—he died the death of fame;
Enough—he died with conquering Græme.

III.

Now over Border, dale and fell,
Full wide and far was terror spread;
For pathless marsh, and mountain cell,
The peasant left his lowly shed.*
The frighten'd flocks and herds were pent
Beneath the peel's rude battlement;
And maids and matrons dropp'd the tear,
While ready warriors seized the spear.
From Branksome's towers, the watch-
man's eye
Dun wreaths of distant smoke can spy,
Which, curling in the rising sun,
Show'd southern ravage was begun.

IV.

Now loud the heedful gate-ward cried—
"Prepare ye all for blows and blood!
Watt Tinlinn,* from the Liddel-side,
Comes wading through the flood.
Full oft the Tynedale snatchers knock
At his long gate, and prove the lock;
It was but last St. Barnabright
They sieged him a whole summer night,
But fled at morning; well they knew,
In vain he never twang'd the yew.
Right sharp has been the evening shower,
That drove him from his Liddel tower;
And, by my faith," the gate-ward said,
"I think 'twill prove a Warden-Raid."†

V.

While thus he spoke, the bold yeoman
Enter'd the echoing barbican.
He led a small and shaggy nag,
That through a bog, from hag to hag,‡
Could bound like any Billhope stag.
It bore his wife and children twain;
A half-clothed serf§ was all their train;
His wife, stout, ruddy, and dark-brow'd,
Of silver brooch and bracelet proud,*
Laugh'd to her friends among the crowd.
He was of stature passing tall,
But sparely form'd, and lean withal;
A batter'd morion on his brow;
A leather jack, as fence enow,

† Protection money exacted by freebooters.

† An inroad commanded by the Warden in person.

‡ The broken ground in a bog.

§ Bondsman.

On his broad shoulders loosely hung;
A border axe behind was slung;
His spear, six Scottish ells in length,
Seem'd newly dyed with gore;
His shafts and bow, of wondrous strength,
His hardy partner bore.

VI.

Thus to the Ladye did Tinlinn show
The tidings of the English foe:—
"Belted Will Howard* is marching here,
And hot Lord Dacre,* with many a spear,
And all the German hackbut-men,*
Who have long lain at Askerten;
They cross'd the Liddel at curfew hour,
And burn'd my little lonely tower:
The fiend receive their souls therefor!
It had not been burnt this year and more.
Barn-yard and dwelling, blazing bright,
Served to guide me on my flight;
But I was chased the livelong night.
Black John of Akeshaw, and Fergus Græme,
Fast upon my traces came,
Until I turn'd at Priesthaugh Scrogg,
And shot their horses in the bog,
Slew Fergus with my lance outright—
I had him long at high despite:
He drove my cows last Eastern's night."

VII.

Now weary scouts from Liddesdale,
Fast hurrying in, confirm'd the tale;
As far as they could judge by ken,
Three hours would bring to Teviot's strand
Three thousand armèd Englishmen—
Meanwhile, full many a warlike band,
From Teviot, Aill, and Ettrick shade,
Came in, their Chief's defence to aid.
There was saddling and mounting in haste,
There was pricking o'er moor and lea;
He that was last at the trysting-place
Was but lightly held of his gaye ladye.

VIII.

From fair St. Mary's silver wave,
From dreary Gamescleugh's dusky height,
His ready lances Thirlestane brave
Array'd beneath a banner bright.
The treasured fleur-de-luce he claims,
To wreathe his shield, since royal James,
Encamp'd by Fala's mossy wave,
The proud distinction grateful gave,
For faith 'mid feudal jars;
What time, save Thirlestane alone,
Of Scotland's stubborn barons none
Would march to southern wars;
And hence, in fair remembrance worn,
Yon sheaf of spears his crest has borne;
Hence his high motto shines reveal'd—
"Ready, aye ready" for the field.

IX.

An aged Knight, to danger steel'd,
With many a moss-trooper came on;
And azure in a golden field,
The stars and crescent graced his shield,
Without the bend of Murdieston.
Wide lay his lands round Oakwood tower,
And wide round haunted Castle-Ower;
High over Borthwick's mountain flood,
His wood-embosom'd mansion stood;
In the dark glen, so deep below,
The herds of plunder'd England low;
His bold retainers' daily food,
And bought with danger, blows, and blood.
Marauding chief! his sole delight
The moonlight raid, the morning fight;
Not even the Flower of Yarrow's charms,
In youth, might tame his rage for arms;
And still, in age, he spurn'd at rest,
And still his brows the helmet press'd,
Albeit the blanchèd locks below
Were white as Dinlay's spotless snow:
Five stately warriors drew the sword
Before their father's band;
A braver knight than Harden's lord
Ne'er belted on a brand.

X.

Scotts of Eskdale, a stalwart band,
Came trooping down the Todshawhill;
By the sword they won their land,
And by the sword they hold it still.
Hearken, Ladye, to the tale,
How thy sires won fair Eskdale.—
Earl Morton was lord of that valley fair,
The Beattisons were his vassals there.
The Earl was gentle, and mild of mood,
The vassals were warlike, and fierce, and rude;
High of heart, and haughty of word,
Little they reck'd of a tame liege Lord.
The Earl into fair Eskdale came,
Homage and seignory to claim:
Of Gilbert the Galliard a heriot† he sought,
Saying, "Give thy best steed, as a vassal ought."
—"Dear to me is my bonny white steed,
Oft has he help'd me at pinch of need;
Lord and Earl though thou be, I trow,
I can rein Bucksfoot better than thou."
Word on word gave fuel to fire,
Till so highly blazed the Beattisons' ire,
But that the Earl the flight had ta'en,
The vassals there their lord had slain.
Sore he plied both whip and spur,
As he urged his steed through Eskdale muir;

† The feudal superior, in certain cases, was entitled to the best horse of the vassal, in name of Heriot, or Herezeld.

And it fell down a weary weight,
Just on the threshold of Branksome gate.

XI.

The Earl was a wrathful man to see,
Full fain avenged would he be.
In haste to Branksome's Lord he spoke,
Saying, "Take these traitors to thy yoke;
For a cast of hawks, and a purse of gold,
All Eskdale I'll sell thee, to have and hold:
Beshrew thy heart, of the Beattisons' clan
If thou leavest on Eske a landed man;
But spare Woodkerrick's lands alone,
For he lent me his horse to escape upon."
A glad man then was Branksome bold,
Down he flung him the purse of gold;
To Eskdale soon he spurr'd amain,
And with him five hundred riders has ta'en.
He left his merrymen in the midst of the hill,
And bade them hold them close and still;
And alone he wended to the plain,
To meet with the Galliard and all his train.
To Gilbert the Galliard thus he said:
"Know thou me for thy liege-lord and head;
Deal not with me as with Morton tame,
For Scotts play best at the roughest game.
Give me in peace my heriot due,
Thy bonny white steed, or thou shalt rue.
If my horn I three times wind, mind."
Eskdale shall long have the sound in

XII.

Loudly the Beattison laugh'd in scorn;
"Little care we for thy winded horn.
Ne'er shall it be the Galliard's lot,
To yield his steed to a haughty Scott.
Wend thou to Branksome back on foot,
With rusty spur and miry boot."—
He blew his bugle so loud and hoarse,
That the dun deer started at fair Craik-cross;
He blew again so loud and clear,
Through the grey mountain-mist there did lances appear;
And the third blast rang with such a din,
That the echoes answer'd from Pentoun-linn,
And all his riders came lightly in.
Then had you seen a gallant shock,
When saddles were emptied, and lances said,
broke!
For each scornful word the Galliard had
A Beattison on the field was laid.
His own good sword the Chieftain drew,
And he bore the Galliard through and through;
Where the Beattisons' blood mix'd with the rill,
The Galliard's-Haugh men call it still.
The Scotts have scatter'd the Beattison clan,
In Eskdale they left but one landed man.
The valley of Eske, from the mouth to the source,
Was lost and won for that bonny white horse.

XIII.

Whitslade the Hawk, and Headshaw came,
And warriors more than I may name,
From Yarrow-cleugh to Hindhaugh-swair,
From Woodhouselie to Chester-glen.
Troop'd man and horse, and bow and spear;
Their gathering word was Bellenden.*
And better hearts o'er Border sod
To siege or rescue never rode.
The Ladye mark'd the aids come in,
And high her heart of pride arose:
She bade her youthful son attend,
That he might know his father's friend,
And learn to face his foes.
"The boy is ripe to look on war;
I saw him draw a cross-bow stiff,
And his true arrow struck afar
The raven's nest upon the cliff;
The red cross, on a southern breast,
Is broader than the raven's nest:
Thou, Whitslade, shalt teach him his weapon to wield,
And o'er him hold his father's shield."

XIV.

Well may you think, the wily page
Cared not to face the Ladye sage.
He counterfeited childish fear,
And shriek'd, and shed full many a tear,
And moan'd and plain'd in manner wild.
The attendants to the Ladye told,
Some fairy, sure, had changed the child,
That wont to be so free and bold.
Then wrathful was the noble dame;
She blush'd blood-red for very shame:—
"Hence! ere the clan his faintness view;
Hence with the weakling to Buccleuch!—
Watt Tinlinn, thou shalt be his guide
To Rangleburn's lonely side.—
Sure some fell fiend has cursed our line,
That coward should e'er be son of mine!"

XV.

A heavy task Watt Tinlinn had,
To guide the counterfeited lad.
Soon as the palfrey felt the weight
Of that ill-omen'd elfish freight,
He bolted, sprung, and rear'd amain,
Nor heeded bit, nor curb, nor rein.
It cost Watt Tinlinn mickle toil
To drive him but a Scottish mile;
But as a shallow brook they cross'd,
The elf, amid the running stream,
His figure changed, like form in dream,
And fled, and shouted, "Lost! lost! lost!"
Full fast the urchin ran and laugh'd,
But faster still a cloth-yard shaft

Whistled from startled Tinlinn's yew,
And pierced his shoulder through and through.
Although the imp might not be slain,
And though the wound soon heal'd again,
Yet, as he ran, he yell'd for pain;
And Watt of Tinlinn, much aghast,
Rode back to Branksome fiery fast.

XVI.

Soon on the hill's steep verge he stood,
That looks o'er Branksome's towers and wood;
And martial murmurs, from below,
Proclaim'd the approaching southern foe.
Through the dark wood, in mingled tone,
Were Border pipes and bugles blown;
The coursers' neighing he could ken,
A measured tread of marching men;
While broke at times the solemn hum,
The Almayn's sullen kettle-drum;
And banners tall, of crimson sheen,
Above the copse appear; [green,
And, glistening through the hawthorns
Shine helm, and shield, and spear.

XVII.

Light foragers, first, to view the ground,
Spurr'd their fleet coursers loosely round;
Behind, in close array, and fast,
The Kendal archers, all in green,
Obedient to the bugle blast,
Advancing from the wood were seen.
To back and guard the archer band,
Lord Dacre's bill-men were at hand:
A hardy race, on Irthing bred,
With kirtles white, and crosses red,
Array'd beneath the banner tall,
That stream'd o'er Acre's conquer'd wall;
And minstrels, as they march'd in order,
Play'd "Noble Lord Dacre, he dwells on the Border."

XVIII.

Behind the English bill and bow,
The mercenaries, firm and slow,
Moved on to fight, in dark array,
By Conrad led of Wolfenstein,
Who brought the band from distant Rhine,
And sold their blood for foreign pay.
The camp their home, their law the sword,
They knew no country, own'd no lord:
They were not arm'd like England's sons,
But bore the levin-darting guns;
Buff coats, all frounced and broider'd o'er,
And morsing-horns† and scarfs they wore;
Each better knee was bared, to aid
The warriors in the escalade;
All, as they march'd, in rugged tongue,
Songs of Teutonic feuds they sung.

† Powder-flasks.

XIX.

But louder still the clamour grew,
And louder still the minstrels blew,
When, from beneath the greenwood tree,
Rode forth Lord Howard's chivalry;
His men-at-arms, with glaive and spear,
Brought up the battle's glittering rear.
There many a youthful knight, full keen
To gain his spurs, in arms was seen;
With favour in his crest, or glove,
Memorial of his ladye-love.
So rode they forth in fair array,
Till full their lengthen'd lines display;
Then call'd a halt, and made a stand,
And cried, "St. George, for merry England!"

XX.

Now every English eye, intent
On Branksome's armèd towers was bent;
So near they were, that they might know
The straining harsh of each cross-bow;
On battlement and bartizan
Gleam'd axe, and spear, and partizan;
Falcon and culver,† on each tower,
Stood prompt their deadly hail to shower;
And flashing armour frequent broke
From eddying whirls of sable smoke,
Where upon tower and turret head,
The seething pitch and molten lead
Reek'd, like a witch's cauldron red.
While yet they gaze, the bridges fall,
The wicket opes, and from the wall
Rides forth the hoary Seneschal.

XXI.

Armèd he rode, all save the head,
His white beard o'er his breast-plate spread;
Unbroke by age, erect his seat,
He ruled his eager courser's gait;
Forced him, with chasten'd fire, to prance,
And, high curvetting, slow advance:
In sign of truce, his better hand
Display'd a peelèd willow wand;
His squire, attending in the rear,
Bore high a gauntlet on a spear.‡
When they espied him riding out,
Lord Howard and Lord Dacre stout
Sped to the front of their array,
To hear what this old knight should say.

XXII.

"Ye English warden lords, of you
Demands the Ladye of Buccleuch,

† Ancient pieces of artillery.

‡ A glove upon a lance was the emblem of faith among the ancient Borderers, who were wont, when any one broke his word, to expose this emblem, and proclaim him a faithless villain at the first Border meeting. This ceremony was much dreaded.

Why, 'gainst the truce of Border tide,
In hostile guise ye dare to ride,
With Kendal bow, and Gilsland brand,
And all yon mercenary band,
Upon the bounds of fair Scotland?
My Ladye redes you swith return;
And, if but one poor straw you burn,
Or do our towers so much molest
As scare one swallow from her nest,
St. Mary! but we'll light a brand
Shall warm your hearths in Cumberland."

XXIII.

A wrathful man was Dacre's lord,
But calmer Howard took the word:
"May't please thy Dame, Sir Seneschal,
To seek the castle's outward wall,
Our pursuivant-at-arms shall show
Both why we came, and when we go."—
The message sped, the noble Dame
To the wall's outward circle came;
Each chief around lean'd on his spear,
To see the pursuivant appear.
All in Lord Howard's livery dress'd,
The lion argent deck'd his breast;
He led a boy of blooming hue—
O sight to meet a mother's view!
It was the heir of great Buccleuch.
Obeisance meet the herald made,
And thus his master's will he said:—

XXIV.

"It irks, high Dame, my noble Lords,
'Gainst ladye fair to draw their swords;
But yet they may not tamely see,
All through the Western Wardenry,
Your law-contemning kinsmen ride,
And burn and spoil the Border-side;
And ill beseems your rank and birth
To make your towers a flemens-firth.†
We claim from thee William of Deloraine,
That he may suffer march-treason* pain.
It was but last St. Cuthbert's even
He prick'd to Stapleton on Leven,
Harried‡ the lands of Richard Musgrave,
And slew his brother by dint of glaive.
Then, since a lone and widow'd Dame
These restless riders may not tame,
Either receive within thy towers
Two hundred of my master's powers,
Or straight they sound their warrison,§
And storm and spoil thy garrison:
And this fair boy, to London led,
Shall good King Edward's page be bred."

XXV.

He ceased—and loud the boy did cry,
And stretch'd his little arms on high;
Implored for aid each well-known face,
And strove to seek the Dame's embrace.
A moment changed that Ladye's cheer,
Gush'd to her eye the unbidden tear;
She gazed upon the leaders round,
And dark and sad each warrior frown'd;
Then, deep within her sobbing breast
She lock'd the struggling sigh to rest;
Unalter'd and collected stood,
And thus replied, in dauntless mood:—

XXVI.

"Say to your Lords of high emprize,
Who war on women and on boys,
That either William of Deloraine
Will cleanse him, by oath, of march-treason stain,
Or else he will the combat take
'Gainst Musgrave, for his honour's sake.
No knight in Cumberland so good,
But William may count with him kin and blood.
Knighthood he took of Douglas' sword,*
When English blood swell'd Ancram's ford;*
And, but Lord Dacre's steed was wight,
And bare him ably in the flight,
Himself had seen him dubb'd a knight.
For the young heir of Branksome's line,
God be his aid, and God be mine;
Through me no friend shall meet his doom;
Here, while I live, no foe finds room.
Then, if thy lords their purpose urge,
Take our defiance loud and high;
Our slogan is their lyke-wake† dirge,
Our moat, the grave where they shall lie."

XXVII.

Proud she look'd round, applause to claim—
Then lighten'd Thirlestane's eye of flame;
His bugle Wat of Harden blew;
Pensils and pennons wide were flung,
To heaven the Border slogan rung,
"St. Mary for the young Buccleuch!"
The English war-cry answer'd wide,
And forward bent each southern spear;
Each Kendal archer made a stride,
And drew the bowstring to his ear;
Each minstrel's war-note loud was blown;—
But, ere a grey-goose shaft had flown,
A horseman gallop'd from the rear.

XXVIII.

"Ah! noble Lords!" he breathless said,
"What treason has your march betray'd?
What make you here, from aid so far,
Before you walls, around you war?
Your foemen triumph in the thought,
That in the toils the lion's caught.

† An asylum for outlaws.
‡ Plundered. § Note of assault.

† *Lykewake*, the watching a corpse previous to interment.

Already on dark Ruberslaw
The Douglas holds his weapon-schaw;†
The lances, waving in his train,
Clothe the dun heath like autumn grain;
And on the Liddel's northern strand,
To bar retreat to Cumberland,
Lord Maxwell ranks his merry men good,
Beneath the eagle and the rood;
And Jedwood, Eske, and Teviotdale,
Have to proud Angus come;
And all the Merse and Lauderdale
Have risen with haughty Home.
An exile from Northumberland,
In Liddesdale I've wander'd long;
But still my heart was with merry England,
And cannot brook my country's wrong;
And hard I've spurr'd all night to show
The mustering of the coming foe."

XXIX.

"And let them come!" fierce Dacre cried;
"For soon yon crest, my father's pride,
That swept the shores of Judah's sea,
And waved in gales of Galilee,
From Branksome's highest towers display'd,
Shall mock the rescue's lingering aid!—
Level each harquebuss on row;
Draw, merry archers, draw the bow;
Up, bill-men, to the walls, and cry,
Dacre for England, win or die!"—

XXX.

"Yet hear," quoth Howard, "calmly hear,
Nor deem my words the words of fear:
For who, in field or foray slack,
Saw the blanche lion e'er fall back?*
But thus to risk our Border flower
In strife against a kingdom's power,
Ten thousand Scots 'gainst thousands three,
Certes, were desperate policy.
Nay, take the terms the Ladye made,
Ere conscious of the advancing aid:
Let Musgrave meet fierce Deloraine
In single fight; and, if he gain,
He gains for us; but if he's cross'd,
'Tis but a single warrior lost:
The rest, retreating as they came,
Avoid defeat, and death, and shame."

XXXI.

Ill could the haughty Dacre brook
His brother Warden's sage rebuke;
And yet his forward step he staid,
And slow and sullenly obey'd.
But ne'er again the Border side
Did these two lords in friendship ride;
And this slight discontent, men say,
Cost blood upon another day.

† *Weapon-schaw*, the military array of a county.

XXXII.

The pursuivant-at-arms again
Before the castle took his stand;
His trumpet call'd, with parleying strain,
The leaders of the Scottish band;
And he defied, in Musgrave's right,
Stout Deloraine to single fight;
A gauntlet at their feet he laid,
And thus the terms of fight he said:—
"If in the lists good Musgrave's sword
Vanquish the Knight of Deloraine,
Your youthful chieftain, Branksome's Lord,
Shall hostage for his clan remain:
If Deloraine foil good Musgrave,
The boy his liberty shall have.
Howe'er it falls, the English band,
Unharming Scots, by Scots unharm'd,
In peaceful march, like men unarm'd,
Shall straight retreat to Cumberland."

XXXIII.

Unconscious of the near relief,
The proffer pleased each Scottish chief,
Though much the Ladye sage gainsay'd;
For though their hearts were brave and true,
From Jedwood's recent sack they knew,
How tardy was the Regent's aid;
And you may guess the noble Dame
Dust not the secret prescience own,
Sprung from the art she might not name,
By which the coming help was known.
Closed was the compact, and agreed
That lists should be enclosed with speed,
Beneath the castle, on a lawn:
They fix'd the morrow for the strife,
On foot, with Scottish axe and knife,
At the fourth hour from peep of da
When Deloraine, from sickness freed,
Or else a champion in his stead,
Should for himself and chieftain stand,
Against stout Musgrave, hand to hand.

XXXIV.

I know right well, that, in their lay,
Full many minstrels sing and say,
Such combat should be made on horse,
On foaming steed, in full career,
With brand to aid, when as the spear
Should shiver in the course:
But he, the jovial Harper, taught
Me, yet a youth, how it was fought,
In guise which now I say;
He knew each ordinance and clause
Of Black Lord Archibald's battle-laws,
In the old Douglas' day.
He brook'd not, he, that scoffing tongue
Should tax his minstrelsy with wrong,
Or call his song untrue:
For this, when they the goblet plied,
And such rude taunt had chafed his pride,
The Bard of Reull he slew.

On Teviot's side, in fight they stood,
And tuneful hands were stain'd with blood;
Where still the thorn's white branches wave,
Memorial o'er his rival's grave.

XXXV.

Why should I tell the rigid doom,
That dragg'd my master to his tomb;
How Ousenam's maidens tore their hair,
Wept till their eyes were dead and dim,
And wrung their hands for love of him,
Who died at Jedwood Air?
He died!—his scholars, one by one,
To the cold silent grave are gone;
And I, alas! survive alone,
To muse o'er rivalries of yore,
And grieve that I shall hear no more
The strains, with envy heard before;
For, with my minstrel brethren fled,
My jealousy of song is dead.

He paused: the listening dames again
Applaud the hoary Minstrel's strain.
With many a word of kindly cheer,—
In pity half, and half sincere,—
Marvell'd the Duchess how so well
His legendary song could tell—
Of ancient deeds, so long forgot;
Of feuds, whose memory was not;
Of forests, now laid waste and bare;
Of towers, which harbour now the hare;
Of manners, long since changed and gone;
Of chiefs, who under their grey stone
So long had slept, that fickle Fame
Had blotted from her rolls their name,
And twined round some new minion's head
The fading wreath for which they bled;
In sooth, 'twas strange, this old man's verse
Could call them from their marble hearse.

The Harper smiled, well pleased; for
Was flattery lost on poet's ear: [ne'er
A simple race! they waste their toil
For the vain tribute of a smile;
E'en when in age their flame expires,
Her dulcet breath can fan its fires:
Their drooping fancy wakes at praise,
And strives to trim the short-lived blaze.

Smiled then, well-pleased, the Aged Man,
And thus his tale continued ran.

CANTO FIFTH.

I.

Call it not vain:—they do not err,
Who say, that when the Poet dies,
Mute Nature mourns her worshipper,
And celebrates his obsequies:
Who say, tall cliff, and cavern lone,
For the departed Bard make moan;
That mountains weep in crystal rill;
That flowers in tears of balm distil;
Through his loved groves that breezes sigh,
And oaks, in deeper groan, reply;
And rivers teach their rushing wave
To murmur dirges round his grave.

II.

Not that, in sooth, o'er mortal urn
Those things inanimate can mourn:
But that the stream, the wood, the gale,
Is vocal with the plaintive wail
Of those, who, else forgotten long,
Lived in the poet's faithful song,
And, with the poet's parting breath,
Whose memory feels a second death.
The Maid's pale shade, who wails her lot,
That love, true love, should be forgot,
From rose and hawthorn shakes the tear
Upon the gentle Minstrel's bier:
The phantom Knight, his glory fled,
Mourns o'er the field he heap'd with dead;
Mounts the wild blast that sweeps amain,
And shrieks along the battle-plain.
The Chief, whose antique crownlet long
Still sparkled in the feudal song,
Now, from the mountain's misty throne,
Sees, in the thanedom once his own,
His ashes undistinguish'd lie,
His place, his power, his memory die:
His groans the lonely caverns fill,
His tears of rage impel the rill;
All mourn the Minstrel's harp unstrung,
Their name unknown, their praise unsung.

III.

Scarcely the hot assault was staid,
The terms of truce were scarcely made,
When they could spy, from Branksome's towers,
The advancing march of martial powers.
Thick clouds of dust afar appear'd,
And trampling steeds were faintly heard;
Bright spears above the columns dun,
Glanced momentary to the sun;
And feudal banners fair display'd
The bands that moved to Branksome's aid.

IV.

Vails not to tell each hardy clan,
From the fair Middle Marches came;
The Bloody Heart blazed in the van,
Announcing Douglas, dreaded name! *
Vails not to tell what steeds did spurn,
Where the Seven Spears of Wedderburne *
Their men in battle-order set;
And Swinton laid the lance in rest,
That tamed of yore the sparkling crest
Of Clarence's Plantagenet. *
Nor list I say what hundreds more,
From the rich Merse and Lammermore,

And Tweed's fair borders, to the war,
Beneath the crest of Old Dunbar,
And Hepburn's mingled banners come,
Down the steep mountain glittering far,
And shouting still, "A Home! a Home!"*

V.

Now squire and knight, from Branksome sent,
On many a courteous message went;
To every chief and lord they paid
Meet thanks for prompt and powerful aid;
And told them,—how a truce was made,
And how a day of fight was ta'en
'Twixt Musgrave and stout Deloraine;
And how the Ladye pray'd them dear,
That all would stay the fight to see,
And deign, in love and courtesy,
To taste of Branksome cheer.
Nor, while they bade to feast each Scot,
Were England's noble Lords forgot.
Himself, the hoary Seneschal,
Rode forth, in seemly terms to call
Those gallant foes to Branksome Hall.
Accepted Howard, than whom knight
Was never dubb'd, more bold in fight;
Nor, when from war and armour free,
More famed for stately courtesy:
But angry Dacre rather chose
In his pavilion to repose.

VI.

Now, noble Dame, perchance you ask,
How these two hostile armies met?
Deeming it were no easy task
To keep the truce which here was set;
Where martial spirits, all on fire,
Breathed only blood and mortal ire.—
By mutual inroads, mutual blows,
By habit, and by nation, foes,
They met on Teviot's strand;
They met and sate them mingled down,
Without a threat, without a frown,
As brothers meet in foreign land:
The hands, the spear that lately grasp'd,
Still in the mailed gauntlet clasp'd,
Were interchanged in greeting dear;
Visors were raised, and faces shown,
And many a friend, to friend made known,
Partook of social cheer.
Some drove the jolly bowl about;
With dice and draughts some chased the day,
And some, with many a merry shout,
In riot, revelry, and rout,
Pursued the foot-ball play.

VII.

Yet, be it known, had bugles blown,
Or sign of war been seen,
Those bands, so fair together ranged,
Those hands, so frankly interchanged,
Had dyed with gore the green:
The merry shout by Teviot-side
Had sunk in war-cries wild and wide,
And in the groan of death;
And whingers† now in friendship bare,
The social meal to part and share,
Had found a bloody sheath.
'Twixt truce and war, such sudden change
Was not infrequent, nor held strange,
In the old Border-day:*
But yet on Branksome's towers and town,
In peaceful merriment, sunk down
The sun's declining ray.

VIII.

The blithesome signs of wassel gay
Decay'd not with the dying day:
Soon through the latticed windows tall
Of lofty Branksome's lordly hall,
Divided square by shafts of stone,
Huge flakes of ruddy lustre shone;
Nor less the gilded rafters rang
With merry harp and beakers' clang:
And frequent, on the darkening plain,
Loud hollo, whoop, or whistle ran,
As bands, their straglers to regain,
Give the shrill watchword of their clan;
And revellers, o'er their bowls, proclaim
Douglas' or Dacre's conquering name.

IX.

Less frequent heard, and fainter still,
At length the various clamours died:
And you might hear, from Branksome hill,
No sound but Teviot's rushing tide;
Save when the changing sentinel
The challenge of his watch could tell;
And save where, through the dark profound,
The clanging axe and hammer's sound
Rung from the nether lawn;
For many a busy hand toil'd there,
Strong pales to shape, and beams to square,
The lists' dread barriers to prepare
Against the morrow's dawn.

X.

Margaret from hall did soon retreat,
Despite the Dame's reproving eye;
Nor mark'd she, as she left her seat,
Full many a stifled sigh;
For many a noble warrior strove
To win the Flower of Teviot's love,
And many a bold ally.—
With throbbing head and anxious heart,
All in her lonely bower apart,
In broken sleep she lay:
By times, from silken couch she rose;
While yet the banner'd hosts repose,
She view'd the dawning day:

† A sort of knife or poniard.

Of all the hundreds sunk to rest,
First woke the loveliest and the best.

XI.

She gazed upon the inner court,
Which in the tower's tall shadow lay;
Where coursers' clang, and stamp, and snort,
Had rung the livelong yesterday;
Now, still as death; till stalking slow,—
The jingling spurs announced his tread,—
A stately warrior pass'd below;
But when he raised his plumèd head—
Bless'd Mary! can it be?—
Secure, as if in Ousenam bowers,
He walks through Branksome's hostile towers,
With fearless step and free.
She dared not sign, she dared not speak—
Oh! if one page's slumbers break,
His blood the price must pay!
Not all the pearls Queen Mary wears,
Not Margaret's yet more precious tears,
Shall buy his life a day.

XII.

Yet was his hazard small; for well
You may bethink you of the spell
Of that sly urchin page;
This to his lord he did impart,
And made him seem, by glamour art,
A knight from Hermitage.
Unchallenged thus, the warder's post,
The court, unchallenged, thus he cross'd,
For all the vassalage:
But O! what magic's quaint disguise
Could blind fair Margaret's azure eyes!
She started from her seat;
While with surprise and fear she strove,
And both could scarcely master love—
Lord Henry's at her feet.

XIII.

Oft have I mused, what purpose bad
That foul malicious urchin had
To bring the meeting round;
For happy love's a heavenly sight,
And by a vile malignant sprite
In such no joy is found;
And oft I've deem'd, perchance he thought
Their erring passion might have wrought
Sorrow, and sin, and shame;
And death to Cranstoun's gallant Knight,
And to the gentle Ladye bright,
Disgrace, and loss of fame.
But earthly spirit could not tell
The heart of them that loved so well.
True love's the gift which God has given
To man alone beneath the heaven:
It is not fantasy's hot fire,
Whose wishes, soon as granted, fly;
It liveth not in fierce desire,
With dead desire it doth not die;
It is the secret sympathy,
The silver link, the silken tie,
Which heart to heart, and mind to mind,
In body and in soul can bind.—
Now leave we Margaret and her Knight,
To tell you of the approaching fight.

XIV.

Their warning blasts the bugles blew,
The pipe's shrill port† aroused each clan;
In haste, the deadly strife to view,
The trooping warriors eager ran:
Thick round the lists their lances stood,
Like blasted pines in Ettrick wood;
To Branksome many a look they threw,
The combatants' approach to view,
And banded many a word of boast,
About the knight each favour'd most.

XV.

Meantime full anxious was the Dame;
For now arose disputed claim,
Of who should fight for Deloraine,
'Twixt Harden and 'twixt Thirlestane:
They 'gan to reckon kin and rent,
And frowning brow on brow was bent;
But yet not long the strife—for, lo!
Himself, the Knight of Deloraine,
Strong, as it seem'd, and free from pain,
In armour sheath'd from top to toe,
Appear'd, and craved the combat due.
The Dame her charm successful knew,
And the fierce chiefs their claims withdrew.

XVI.

When for the lists they sought the plain,
The stately Ladye's silken rein
Did noble Howard hold;
Unarmèd by her side he walk'd,
And much, in courteous phrase, they talk'd
Of feats of arms of old.
Costly his garb—his Flemish ruff
Fell o'er his doublet, shaped of buff,
With satin slash'd and lined;
Tawny his boot, and gold his spur,
His cloak was all of Poland fur,
His hose with silver twined;
His Bilboa blade, by Marchmen felt,
Hung in a broad and studded belt;
Hence, in rude phrase, the Borderers still
Call'd noble Howard, Belted Will.

XVII.

Behind Lord Howard and the Dame,
Fair Margaret on her palfrey came,
Whose foot-cloth swept the ground:
White was her wimple, and her veil,
And her loose locks a chaplet pale
Of whitest roses bound;
The lordly Angus, by her side,
In courtesy to cheer her tried;

† A martial piece of music, adapted to the bagpipes.

Without his aid, her hand in vain
Had strove to guide her broider'd rein.
He deem'd she shudder'd at the sight
Of warriors met for mortal fight;
But cause of terror, all unguess'd,
Was fluttering in her gentle breast,
When, in their chairs of crimson placed,
The Dame and she the barriers graced.

XVIII.

Prize of the field, the young Buccleuch,
An English knight led forth to view;
Scarce rued the boy his present plight,
So much he longed to see the fight.
Within the lists, in knightly pride,
High Home and haughty Dacre ride;
Their leading staffs of steel they wield,
As marshals of the mortal field;
While to each knight their care assign'd
Like vantage of the sun and wind.
Then heralds hoarse did loud proclaim,
In King and Queen, and Warden's name,
That none, while lasts the strife,
Should dare, by look, or sign, or word,
Aid to a champion to afford,
On peril of his life;
And not a breath the silence broke,
Till thus the alternate Herald spoke:—

XIX.

ENGLISH HERALD.

"Here standeth Richard of Musgrave,
Good knight and true, and freely born,
Amends from Deloraine to crave,
For foul despiteous scathe and scorn.
He sayeth, that William of Deloraine
Is traitor false by Border laws;
This with his sword he will maintain,
So help him God, and his good cause!"

XX.

SCOTTISH HERALD.

"Here standeth William of Deloraine,
Good knight and true, of noble strain,
Who sayeth, that foul treason's stain,
Since he bore arms, ne'er soil'd his coat;
And that, so help him God above!
He will on Musgrave's body prove,
He lies most foully in his throat."

LORD DACRE.

"Forward, brave champions, to the fight!
Sound trumpets!"——

LORD HOME.

——"God defend the right!"
Then, Teviot! how thine echoes rang,
When bugle-sound and trumpet-clang
Let loose the martial foes,
And in mid list, with shield poised high,
And measured step and wary eye,
The combatants did close.

XXI.

Ill would it suit your gentle ear,
Ye lovely listeners to hear
How to the axe the helms did sound,
And blood pour'd down from many a wound;
For desperate was the strife, and long,
And either warrior fierce and strong.
But, were each dame a listening knight,
I well could tell how warriors fight!
For I have seen war's lightning flashing,
Seen the claymore with bayonet clashing,
Seen through red blood the war-horse dashing,
And scorn'd, amid the reeling strife,
To yield a step for death or life.—

XXII.

'Tis done, 'tis done! that fatal blow
Has stretch'd him on the bloody plain;
He strives to rise—Brave Musgrave, no!
Thence never shalt thou rise again!
He chokes in blood—some friendly hand
Undo the visor's barrèd band,
Unfix the gorget's iron clasp,
And give him room for life to gasp!
O, bootless aid!—haste, holy Friar,
Haste, ere the sinner shall expire!
Of all his guilt let him be shriven,
And smooth his path from earth to heaven!

XXIII.

In haste the holy Friar sped;—
His naked foot was dyed with red,
As through the lists he ran:
Unmindful of the shouts on high,
That hail'd the conqueror's victory,
He raised the dying man:
Loose waved his silver beard and hair,
As o'er him he kneel'd down in prayer;
And still the crucifix on high
He holds before his darkening eye;
And still he bends an anxious ear,
His faltering penitence to hear;
Still props him from the bloody sod,
Still, even when soul and body part,
Pours ghostly comfort on his heart,
And bids him trust in God!
Unheard he prays;—the death-pang's o'er!
Richard of Musgrave breathes no more.

XXIV.

As if exhausted in the fight,
Or musing o'er the piteous sight,
The silent victor stands;
His beaver did he not unclasp,
Mark'd not the shouts, felt not the grasp
Of gratulating hands.
When lo! strange cries of wild surprise,
Mingled with seeming terror, rise
Among the Scottish bands;
And all, amid the throng'd array,
In panic haste gave open way
To a half-naked ghastly man,
Who downward from the castle ran:

He cross'd the barriers at a bound,
And wild and haggard look'd around,
As dizzy, and in pain;
And all, upon the armed ground,
Knew William of Deloraine!
Each lady sprung from seat with speed;
Vaulted each marshal from his steed;
"And who art thou," they cried,
"Who hast this battle fought and won?"
His plumèd helm was soon undone—
"Cranstoun of Teviot-side!
For this fair prize I've fought and won,"—
And to the Ladye led her son.

XXV.

Full oft the rescued boy she kiss'd,
And often press'd him to her breast;
For, under all her dauntless show,
Her heart had throbb'd at every blow;
Yet not Lord Cranstoun deign'd she greet,
Though low he kneelèd at her feet.
Me lists not tell what words were made,
What Douglas, Home, and Howard said—
—For Howard was a generous foe—
And how the clan united pray'd
The Ladye would the feud forego,
And deign to bless the nuptial hour
Of Cranstoun's Lord and Teviot's Flower.

XXVI.

She look'd to river, look'd to hill,
Thought on the Spirit's prophecy,
Then broke her silence stern and still,—
"Not you, but Fate, has vanquished me;
Their influence kindly stars may shower
On Teviot's tide and Branksome's tower,
For pride is quell'd, and love is free."—
She took fair Margaret by the hand,
Who, breathless, trembling, scarce might stand;
[she:—
That hand to Cranstoun's lord gave
"As I am true to thee and thine,
Do thou be true to me and mine!
This clasp of love our bond shall be;
For this is your betrothing day,
And all these noble lords shall stay,
To grace it with their company."

XXVII.

All as they left the listed plain,
Much of the story she did gain;
How Cranstoun fought with Deloraine,
And of his page, and of the Book
Which from the wounded knight he took;
And how he sought her castle high,
That morn, by help of gramarye;
How, in Sir William's armour dight,
Stolen by his page, while slept the knight,
He took on him the single fight.
But half his tale he left unsaid,
And linger'd till he join'd the maid.—
Cared not the Ladye to betray
Her mystic arts in view of day;
But well she thought, ere midnight came,
Of that strange page the pride to tame,
From his foul hands the Book to save,
And send it back to Michael's grave.—
Needs not to tell each tender word
'Twixt Margaret and 'twixt Cranstoun's lord;
Nor how she told of former woes,
And how her bosom fell and rose,
While he and Musgrave bandied blows.—
Needs not these lovers' joys to tell:
One day, fair maids, you'll know them well.

XXVIII.

William of Deloraine, some chance
Had waken'd from his death-like trance;
And taught that, in the listed plain,
Another, in his arms and shield,
Against fierce Musgrave axe did wield,
Under the name of Deloraine.
Hence, to the field, unarm'd, he ran,
And hence his presence scared the clan,
Who held him for some fleeting wraith,†
And not a man of blood and breath.
Not much this new ally he loved,
Yet, when he saw what hap had proved,
He greeted him right heartilie:
He would not waken old debate,
For he was void of rancorous hate,
Though rude, and scant of courtesy;
In raids he spilt but seldom blood,
Unless when men-at-arms withstood,
Or, as was meet, for deadly feud.
He ne'er bore grudge for stalwart blow,
Ta'en in fair fight from gallant foe:
And so 'twas seen of him, e'en now,
When on dead Musgrave he look'd down;
Grief darken'd on his rugged brow,
Though half disguisèd with a frown;
And thus, while sorrow bent his head,
His foeman's epitaph he made:—

XXIX.

"Now, Richard Musgrave, liest thou here!
I ween, my deadly enemy;
For, if I slew thy brother dear,
Thou slew'st a sister's son to me;
And when I lay in dungeon dark,
Of Naworth Castle, long months three,
Till ransom'd for a thousand mark,
Dark Musgrave, it was 'long of thee.
And, Musgrave, could our fight be tried,
And thou wert now alive, as I,
No mortal man should us divide,
Till one, or both of us, did die:
Yet rest thee God! for well I know
I ne'er shall find a nobler foe.
In all the northern counties here,
Whose word is snaffle, spur, and spear,

† The spectral apparition of a living person.

Thou wert the best to follow gear!
'Twas pleasure, as we look'd behind,
To see how thou the chase could'st wind,
Cheer the dark blood-hound on his way,
And with the bugle rouse the fray!*
I'd give the lands of Deloraine,
Dark Musgrave were alive again."

XXX.

So mourn'd he, till Lord Dacre's band
Were bowning back to Cumberland.
They raised brave Musgrave from the field,
And laid him on his bloody shield;
On levell'd lances, four and four,
By turns, the noble burden bore.
Before, at times, upon the gale,
Was heard the Minstrel's plaintive wail;
Behind, four priests, in sable stole,
Sung requiem for the warrior's soul:
Around, the horsemen slowly rode;
With trailing pikes the spearmen trode;
And thus the gallant knight they bore,
Through Liddesdale to Leven's shore;
Thence to Holme Coltrame's lofty nave,
And laid him in his father's grave.

[song,

THE harp's wild notes, though hush'd the
The mimic march of death prolong;
Now seems it far, and now a-near,
Now meets, and now eludes the ear;
Now seems some mountain-side to sweep,
Now faintly dies in valley deep;
Seems now as if the Minstrel's wail,
Now the sad requiem, loads the gale;
Last, o'er the warrior's closing grave,
Rung the full choir in choral stave.

After due pause, they bade him tell,
Why he, who touch'd the harp so well,
Should thus, with ill-rewarded toil,
Wander a poor and thankless soil,
When the more generous Southern Land
Would well requite his skilful hand.

The aged Harper, howsoe'er
His only friend, his harp, was dear,
Liked not to hear it rank'd so high
Above his flowing poesy:
Less liked he still, that scornful jeer
Misprised the land he loved so dear;
High was the sound, as thus again
The Bard resumed his minstrel strain.

CANTO SIXTH.

I.

BREATHES there the man, with soul so
Who never to himself hath said, [dead,
This is my own, my native land!
Whose heart hath ne'er within him burn'd,
As home his footsteps he hath turn'd,
From wandering on a foreign strand!
If such there breathe, go, mark him well;
For him no Minstrel raptures swell;
High though his titles, proud his name,
Boundless his wealth as wish can claim;
Despite those titles, power, and pelf,
The wretch, concentred all in self,
Living, shall forfeit fair renown,
And, doubly dying, shall go down
To the vile dust, from whence he sprung,
Unwept, unhonour'd, and unsung.

II.

O Caledonia! stern and wild,
Meet nurse for a poetic child!
Land of brown heath and shaggy wood,
Land of the mountain and the flood,
Land of my sires! what mortal hand
Can e'er untie the filial band,
That knits me to thy rugged strand?
Still, as I view each well-known scene,
Think what is now, and what hath been,
Seems as, to me, of all bereft, [left;
Sole friends thy woods and streams were
And thus I love them better still,
Even in extremity of ill.
By Yarrow's streams still let me stray,
Though none should guide my feeble way;
Still feel the breeze down Ettrick break,
Although it chill my wither'd cheek;†
Still lay my head by Teviot Stone,
Though there, forgotten and alone,
The Bard may draw his parting groan.

III.

Not scorn'd like me! to Branksome Hall
The Minstrels came, at festive call;
Trooping they came, from near and far,
The jovial priests of mirth and war;
Alike for feast and fight prepared,
Battle and banquet both they shared.
Of late, before each martial clan,
They blew their death-note in the van,
But now, for every merry mate,
Rose the portcullis' iron grate;
They sound the pipe, they strike the string,
They dance, they revel, and they sing,
Till the rude turrets shake and ring.

IV.

Me lists not at this tide declare
The splendour of the spousal rite,
How muster'd in the chapel fair
Both maid and matron, squire and knight;
Me lists not tell of owches rare,
Of mantles green, and braided hair,
And kirtles furr'd with miniver;
What plumage waved the altar round,
How spurs and ringing chainlets sound;

† The preceding four lines now form the inscription on the Monument to Sir Walter Scott in the Market-place of Selkirk.

And hard it were for bard to speak
The changeful hue of Margaret's cheek;
That lovely hue which comes and flies,
As awe and shame alternate rise!

V.

Some bards have sung, the Ladye high
Chapel or altar came not nigh;
Nor durst the rights of spousal grace,
So much she fear'd each holy place.
False slanders these:—I trust right well
She wrought not by forbidden spell;*
For mighty words and signs have power
O'er sprites in planetary hour:
Yet scarce I praise their venturous part,
Who tamper with such dangerous art.
But this for faithful truth I say,
The Ladye by the altar stood,
Of sable velvet her array,
And on her head a crimson hood,
With pearls embroider'd and entwined,
Guarded with gold, with ermine lined;
A merlin sat upon her wrist,*
Held by a leash of silken twist.

VI.

The spousal rites were ended soon:
'Twas now the merry hour of noon,
And in the lofty arched hall
Was spread the gorgeous festival.
Steward and squire, with heedful haste,
Marshall'd the rank of every guest;
Pages, with ready blade, were there,
The mighty meal to carve and share:
O'er capon, heron-shew, and crane,
And princely peacock's gilded train,*
And o'er the boar-head, garnish'd brave,
And cygnet from St. Mary's wave;
O'er ptarmigan and venison,
The priest had spoke his benison.
Then rose the riot and the din,
Above, beneath, without, within;
For, from the lofty balcony,
Rung trumpet, shalm, and psaltery:
Their clanging bowls old warriors quaff'd,
Loudly they spoke, and loudly laugh'd;
Whisper'd young knights, in tone more mild,
To ladies fair, and ladies smiled.
The hooded hawks, high perch'd on beam,
The clamour join'd with whistling scream,
And flapp'd their wings, and shook their bells,
In concert with the stag-hound's yells.
Round go the flasks of ruddy wine,
From Bourdeaux, Orleans, or the Rhine;
Their tasks the busy sewers ply,
And all is mirth and revelry.

VII.

The Goblin Page, omitting still
No opportunity of ill,
Strove now, while blood ran hot and high,
To rouse debate and jealousy;
Till Conrad, Lord of Wolfenstein,
By nature fierce, and warm with wine,
And now in humour highly cross'd,
About some steeds his band had lost,
High words to words succeeding still,
Smote, with his gauntlet, stout Hunthill;*
A hot and hardy Rutherford, [sword.
Whom men called Dickon Draw-the-
He took it on the page's saye,
Hunthill had driven these steeds away.
Then Howard, Home, and Douglas rose,
The kindling discord to compose:
Stern Rutherford right little said,
But bit his glove,* and shook his head.—
A fortnight thence, in Inglewood,
Stout Conrad, cold, and drench'd in blood,
His bosom gored with many a wound,
Was by a woodman's lyme-dog found;
Unknown the manner of his death,
Gone was his brand, both sword and sheath;
But ever from that time, 'twas said,
That Dickon wore a Cologne blade.

VIII.

The dwarf, who fear'd his master's eye
Might his foul treachery espie,
Now sought the castle buttery,
Where many a yeoman, bold and free,
Revell'd as merrily and well
As those that sat in lordly selle.
Watt Tinlinn, there, did frankly raise
The pledge to Arthur Fire-the-Braes;
And he, as by his breeding bound,
To Howard's merry-men sent it round.
To quit them, on the English side,
Red Roland Forster loudly cried,
"A deep carouse to yon fair bride!"—
At every pledge, from vat and pail,
Foam'd forth in floods the nut-brown ale;
While shout the riders every one:
Such day of mirth ne'er cheer'd their clan,
Since old Buccleuch the name did gain,
When in the cleuch the buck was ta'en.

IX.

The wily page, with vengeful thought,
Remember'd him of Tinlinn's yew,
And swore, it should be dearly bought
That ever he the arrow drew.
First, he the yeoman did molest,
With bitter gibe and taunting jest;
Told, how he fled at Solway strife,
And how Hob Armstrong cheer'd his wife;
Then, shunning still his powerful arm,
At unawares he wrought him harm;
From trencher stole his choicest cheer,
Dash'd from his lips his can of beer;
Then, to his knee sly creeping on,
With bodkin pierced him to the bone:
The venom'd wound, and festering joint,
Long after rued that bodkin's point.

The startled yeoman swore and spurn'd,
And board and flagons overturn'd.
Riot and clamour wild began;
Back to the hall the Urchin ran;
Took in a darkling nook his post, [lost!"
And grinn'd, and mutter'd, "Lost! lost!

X.

By this, the Dame, lest farther fray
Should mar the concord of the day,
Had bid the Minstrels tune their lay.
And first stept forth old Albert Græme,
The Minstrel of that ancient name:*
Was none who struck the harp so well,
Within the Land Debateable;
Well friended, too, his hardy kin,
Whoever lost, were sure to win; [broth,
They sought the beeves that made their
In Scotland and in England both.
In homely guise, as nature bade,
His simple song the Borderer said.

XI.

ALBERT GRÆME.

It was an English ladye bright
(The sun shines fair on Carlisle wall),
And she would marry a Scottish knight,
For Love will still be lord of all.

Blithely they saw the rising sun,
When he shone fair on Carlisle wall;
But they were sad ere day was done,
Though Love was still the lord of all.

Her sire gave brooch and jewel fine,
Where the sun shines fair on Carlisle wall;
Her brother gave but a flask of wine,
For ire that Love was lord of all.

For she had lands, both meadow and lea,
Where the sun shines fair on Carlisle wall,
And he swore her death, ere he would see
A Scottish knight the lord of all!

XII.

That wine she had not tasted well
(The sun shines fair on Carlisle wall),
When dead, in her true love's arms, she fell,
For Love was still the lord of all!

He pierced her brother to the heart,
Where the sun shines fair on Carlisle wall:—
So perish all would true love part,
That Love may still be lord of all!

And then he took the cross divine [wall),
(Where the sun shines fair on Carlisle
And died for her sake in Palestine,
So Love was still the lord of all.

Now all ye lovers, that faithful prove
(The sun shines fair on Carlisle wall),
Pray for their souls who died for love,
For Love shall still be lord of all!

XIII.

As ended Albert's simple lay,
Arose a bard of loftier port;
For sonnet, rhyme, and roundelay,
Renown'd in haughty Henry's court:
There rung thy harp, unrivall'd long,
Fitztraver of the silver song!
The gentle Surrey loved his lyre—
Who has not heard of Surrey's fame?*
His was the hero's soul of fire,
And his the bard's immortal name,
And his was love, exalted high
By all the glow of chivalry.

XIV.

They sought, together, climes afar,
And oft, within some olive grove,
When even came with twinkling star,
They sung of Surrey's absent love.
His step the Italian peasant stay'd,
And deem'd that spirits from on high,
Round where some hermit saint was laid,
Were breathing heavenly melody;
So sweet did harp and voice combine,
To praise the name of Geraldine.

XV.

Fitztraver! O what tongue may say
The pangs thy faithful bosom knew,
When Surrey, of the deathless lay,
Ungrateful Tudor's sentence slew?
Regardless of the tyrant's frown,
His harp call'd wrath and vengeance down.
He left, for Naworth's iron towers,
Windsor's green glades, and courtly bowers,
And faithful to his patron's name,
With Howard still Fitztraver came;
Lord William's foremost favourite he,
And Chief of all his minstrelsy.

XVI.

FITZTRAVER.

'Twas All-soul's eve, and Surrey's heart beat high; [start,
He heard the midnight bell with anxious
Which told the mystic hour, approaching nigh, [art,
When wise Cornelius promised, by his
To show to him the ladye of his heart,
Albeit betwixt them roar'd the ocean grim;
Yet so the sage had hight to play his part,
That he should see her form in life and limb, [thought of him.
And mark, if still she loved, and still she

XVII.

Dark was the vaulted room of gramarye,
To which the wizard led the gallant Knight,
Save that before a mirror, huge and high,
A hallow'd taper shed a glimmering light

On mystic implements of magic might;
On cross, and character, and talisman,
And almagest, and altar, nothing bright:
For fitful was the lustre, pale and wan,
As watchlight by the bed of some departing man.

XVIII.

But soon, within that mirror huge and high,
Was seen a self-emitted light to gleam;
And forms upon its breast the Earl'gan spy,
Cloudy and indistinct, as feverish dream;
Till, slow arranging, and defined, they seem
To form a lordly and a lofty room,
Part lighted by a lamp with silver beam,
Placed by a couch of Agra's silken loom,
And part by moonshine pale, and part was hid in gloom.

XIX.

Fair all the pageant—but how passing fair
The slender form, which lay on couch of Ind!
O'er her white bosom stray'd her hazel hair,
Pale her dear cheek, as if for love she pined; [clined,
All in her night-robe loose she lay re-
And, pensive, read from tablet eburnine,
Some strain that seem'd her inmost soul to find:—
That favour'd strain was Surrey's raptured line, [aldine!
That fair and lovely form, the Lady Ger-

XX.

Slow roll'd the clouds upon the lovely form,
And swept the goodly vision all away—
So royal envy roll'd the murky storm
O'er my beloved Master's glorious day.
Thou jealous, ruthless tyrant! Heaven repay
On thee, and on thy children's latest line,
The wild caprice of thy despotic sway,
The gory bridal bed, the plunder'd shrine, [Geraldine!
The murder'd Surrey's blood, the tears of

XXI.

Both Scots and Southern chiefs prolong
Applauses of Fitztraver's song;
These hated Henry's name as death,
And those still held the ancient faith.—
Then, from his seat, with lofty air,
Rose Harold, bard of brave St. Clair:
St. Clair, who, feasting high at Home,
Had with that lord to battle come.
Harold was born where restless seas
Howl round the storm-swept Orcades;
Where erst St. Clairs held princely sway
O'er isle and islet, strait and bay;—
Still nods their palace to its fall,
Thy pride and sorrow, fair Kirkwall!—
Thence oft he mark'd fierce Pentland rave,
As if grim Odin rode her wave;
And watch'd, the whilst, with visage pale,
And throbbing heart, the struggling sail;
For all of wonderful and wild
Had rapture for the lonely child.

XXII.

And much of wild and wonderful
In these rude isles might fancy cull;
For thither came, in times afar,
Stern Lochlin's sons of roving war,
The Norsemen, train'd to spoil and blood,
Skill'd to prepare the raven's food;
Kings of the main their leaders brave,
Their barks the dragons of the wave.
And there, in many a stormy vale,
The Scald had told his wondrous tale;
And many a Runic column high
Had witness'd grim idolatry.
And thus had Harold, in his youth,
Learn'd many a Saga's rhyme uncouth,—
Of that Sea-Snake,* tremendous curl'd,
Whose monstrous circle girds the world;
Of those dread Maids,* whose hideous yell
Maddens the battle's bloody swell;
Of Chiefs, who, guided through the gloom
By the pale death-lights of the tomb,
Ransack'd the graves of warriors old,
Their falchions wrench'd from corpses' hold,*
Waked the deaf tomb with war's alarms,
And bade the dead arise to arms!
With war and wonder all on flame,
To Roslin's bowers young Harold came,
Where, by sweet glen and greenwood tree,
He learn'd a milder minstrelsy;
Yet something of the Northern spell
Mix'd with the softer numbers well.

XXIII.

HAROLD.

O listen, listen, ladies gay!
No haughty feat of arms I tell;
Soft is the note, and sad the lay,
That mourns the lovely Rosabelle.

"Moor, moor the barge, ye gallant crew!
And, gentle ladye, deign to stay!
Rest thee in Castle Ravensheuch,
Nor tempt the stormy firth to-day.

"The blackening wave is edged with white:
To inch† and rock the sea-mews fly;
The fishers have heard the Water-Sprite,
Whose screams forbode that wreck is nigh.

"Last night the gifted Seer did view
A wet shroud swathed round ladye gay;
Then stay thee, Fair, in Ravensheuch;
Why cross the gloomy firth to-day?"—

† *Inch*, isle.

"'Tis not because Lord Lindesay's heir
To-night at Roslin leads the ball,
But that my ladye-mother there
Sits lonely in her castle-hall.

"'Tis not because the ring they ride,
And Lindesay at the ring rides well,
But that my sire the wine will chide,
If 'tis not fill'd by Rosabelle."—

O'er Roslin all that dreary night,
A wondrous blaze was seen to gleam;
'Twas broader than the watch-fire's light,
And redder than the bright moon-beam.

It glared on Roslin's castled rock,
It ruddied all the copse-wood glen;
'Twas seen from Dryden's groves of oak,
And seen from cavern'd Hawthornden.

Seem'd all on fire that chapel proud,
Where Roslin's chiefs uncoffin'd lie,
Each Baron, for a sable shroud,
Sheathed in his iron panoply.

Seem'd all on fire within, around,
Deep sacristy and altar's pale;
Shone every pillar foliage-bound,
And glimmer'd all the dead men's mail.

Blazed battlement and pinnet high,
Blazed every rose-carved buttress fair—
So still they blaze, when fate is nigh
The lordly line of high St. Clair.

There are twenty of Roslin's barons bold
Lie buried within that proud chapelle;
Each one the holy vault doth hold—
But the sea holds lovely Rosabelle.

And each St. Clair was buried there,
With candle, with book, and with knell;
But the sea-caves rung, and the wild winds
The dirge of lovely Rosabelle. [sung,

XXIV.

So sweet was Harold's piteous lay,
Scarce mark'd the guests the darken'd
hall,
Though, long before the sinking day,
A wondrous shade involved them all:
It was not eddying mist or fog,
Drain'd by the sun from fen or bog;
Of no eclipse had sages told;
And yet, as it came on apace,
Each one could scarce his neighbour's face,
Could scarce his own stretch'd hand behold.
A secret horror check'd the feast,
And chill'd the soul of every guest;
Even the high Dame stood half aghast,
She knew some evil on the blast;
The elfish page fell to the ground,
And, shuddering, mutter'd, "Found!
found! found!"

XXV.

Then sudden, through the darken'd air
A flash of lightning came;
So broad, so bright, so red the glare,
The castle seem'd on flame.
Glanced every rafter of the hall,
Glanced every shield upon the wall;
Each trophied beam, each sculptured
stone,
Were instant seen, and instant gone;
Full through the guests' bedazzled band
Resistless flash'd the levin-brand,
And fill'd the hall with smouldering smoke,
As on the elvish page it broke.
It broke, with thunder long and loud,
Dismay'd the brave, appall'd the
proud,—
From sea to sea the larum rung;
On Berwick wall, and at Carlisle withal,
To arms the startled warders sprung.
When ended was the dreadful roar,
The elvish dwarf was seen no more!

XXVI.

Some heard a voice in Branksome Hall,
Some saw a sight not seen by all;
That dreadful voice was heard by some,
Cry, with loud summons, "GYLBIN,
COME!"
And on the spot where burst the brand,
Just where the page had flung him
down,
Some saw an arm, and some a hand,
And some the waving of a gown.
The guests in silence pray'd and shook,
And terror dimm'd each lofty look.
But none of all the astonish'd train
Was so dismay'd as Deloraine:
His blood did freeze, his brain did burn,
'Twas fear'd his mind would ne'er return;
For he was speechless, ghastly, wan,
Like him of whom the story ran,
Who spoke the spectre-hound in Man.
At length, by fits, he darkly told,
With broken hint, and shuddering cold—
That he had seen right certainly,
A shape with amice wrapp'd around,
With a wrought Spanish baldric bound,
Like pilgrim from beyond the sea;
And knew—but how it matter'd not—
It was the wizard, Michael Scott.

XXVII.

The anxious crowd, with horror pale,
All trembling heard the wondrous tale;
No sound was made, no word was spoke,
Till noble Angus silence broke;
And he a solemn sacred plight
Did to St. Bride of Douglas make,*
That he a pilgrimage would take
To Melrose Abbey, for the sake
Of Michael's restless sprite.

Then each, to ease his troubled breast,
To some bless'd saint his prayers address'd:
Some to St. Modan made their vows,
Some to St. Mary of the Lowes,
Some to the Holy Rood of Lisle,
Some to our Ladye of the Isle;
Each did his patron witness make,
That he such pilgrimage would take,
And monks should sing, and bells should toll,
All for the weal of Michael's soul.
While vows were ta'en, and prayers were pray'd,
'Tis said the noble Dame, dismay'd,
Renounced, for aye, dark magic's aid.

XXVIII.

Nought of the bridal will I tell,
Which after in short space befell;
Nor how brave sons and daughters fair
Bless'd Teviot's Flower, and Cranstoun's heir:
After such dreadful scene, 'twere vain
To wake the note of mirth again.
More meet it were to mark the day
Of penitence, and prayer divine,
When pilgrim chiefs, in sad array,
Sought Melrose' holy shrine.

XXIX.

With naked foot, and sackcloth vest,
And arms enfolded on his breast,
Did every pilgrim go;
The standers-by might hear uneath,
Footstep, or voice, or high-drawn breath,
Through all the lengthen'd row:
No lordly look, nor martial stride;
Gone was their glory, sunk their pride,
Forgotten their renown;
Silent and slow, like ghosts they glide
To the high altar's hallow'd side,
And there they knelt them down:
Above the suppliant chieftains wave
The banners of departed brave;
Beneath the letter'd stones were laid
The ashes of their fathers dead;
From many a garnish'd niche around,
Stern saints and tortured martyrs frown'd.

XXX.

And slow up the dim aisle afar,
With sable cowl and scapular,
And snow-white stoles, in order due,
The holy Fathers, two and two,
In long procession came;
Taper, and host, and book they bare,
And holy banner, flourish'd fair
With the Redeemer's name.
Above the prostrate pilgrim band
The mitred Abbot stretch'd his hand,
And bless'd them as they kneel'd;
With holy cross he sign'd them all,
And pray'd they might be sage in hall,
And fortunate in field.

Then mass was sung, and prayers were said,
And solemn requiem for the dead;
And bells toll'd out their mighty peal,
For the departed spirit's weal;
And ever in the office close
The hymn of intercession rose;
And far the echoing aisles prolong
The awful burthen of the song,—
DIES IRÆ, DIES ILLA,
SOLVET SÆCLUM IN FAVILLA;
While the pealing organ rung.
Were it meet with sacred strain
To close my lay, so light and vain,
Thus the holy Fathers sung:—

XXXI.

HYMN FOR THE DEAD.

That day of wrath, that dreadful day,
When heaven and earth shall pass away!
What power shall be the sinner's stay?
How shall he meet that dreadful day?

When, shrivelling like a parchèd scroll,
The flaming heavens together roll;
When louder yet, and yet more dread,
Swells the high trump that wakes the dead!

Oh! on that day, that wrathful day,
When man to judgment wakes from clay,
Be THOU the trembling sinner's stay,
Though heaven and earth shall pass away.

HUSH'D is the harp—the Minstrel gone.
And did he wander forth alone!
Alone, in indigence and age,
To linger out his pilgrimage?
No!—close beneath proud Newark's tower,
Arose the Minstrel's lowly bower;
A simple hut; but there was seen
The little garden hedged with green,
The cheerful hearth, and lattice clean.
There shelter'd wanderers, by the blaze,
Oft heard the tale of other days;
For much he loved to ope his door,
And give the aid he begg'd before.
So pass'd the winter's day; but still,
When summer smiled on sweet Bowhill,
And July's eve, with balmy breath,
Waved the blue-bells on Newark heath;
When throstles sung in Harehead-shaw,
And corn was green on Carterhaugh,
And flourish'd, broad, Blackandro's oak,
The aged Harper's soul awoke!
Then would he sing achievements high,
And circumstance of chivalry,
Till the rapt traveller would stay,
Forgetful of the closing day;
And noble youths, the strain to hear,
Forsook the hunting of the deer;
And Yarrow, as he roll'd along,
Bore burden to the Minstrel's song.

MARMION:

A TALE OF FLODDEN FIELD.

IN SIX CANTOS.

Alas! that Scottish maid should sing
The combat where her lover fell!
That Scottish Bard should wake the string,
The triumph of our foes to tell!

LEYDEN.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

HENRY LORD MONTAGU, ETC., ETC., ETC.

THIS ROMANCE IS INSCRIBED BY

THE AUTHOR.

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It is hardly to be expected, that an Author whom the Public have honoured with some degree of applause, should not be again a trespasser on their kindness. Yet the Author of MARMION *must be supposed to feel some anxiety concerning its success, since he is sensible that he hazards, by this second intrusion, any reputation which his first Poem may have procured him. The present story turns upon the private adventures of a fictitious character; but is called a Tale of Flodden Field, because the hero's fate is connected with that memorable defeat, and the causes which led to it. The design of the Author was, if possible, to apprize his readers, at the outset, of the date of his Story, and to prepare them for the manners of the Age in which it is laid. Any Historical Narrative, far more an attempt at Epic composition, exceeded his plan of a Romantic Tale; yet he may be permitted to hope, from the popularity of* THE LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL, *that an attempt to paint the manners of the feudal times, upon a broader scale, and in the course of a more interesting story, will not be unacceptable to the Public.*

The Poem opens about the commencement of August, and concludes with the defeat of Flodden, 9th September, 1513.

ASHESTIEL, 1808.

INTRODUCTION TO EDITION 1830.

WHAT I have to say respecting this Poem may be briefly told. In the Introduction to the "Lay of the Last Minstrel," I have mentioned the circumstances, so far as my literary life is concerned, which induced me to resign the active pursuit of an honourable profession for the more precarious resources of literature. My appointment to the Sheriffdom of Selkirk called for a change of residence. I left, therefore, the pleasant cottage I had upon the side of the Esk for the "pleasanter banks of the Tweed," in order to comply with the law, which requires that the Sheriff shall be resident, at least during a certain number of months, within his jurisdiction. We found a delightful retirement, by my becoming the tenant of my intimate friend and cousin-german, Colonel Russell, in his mansion of Ashestiel, which was unoccupied, during his absence on military service in India. The house was adequate to our accommodation, and the exercise of a limited hospitality. The situation is uncommonly beautiful, by the side of a fine river, whose streams are there very favourable for angling, surrounded by the remains of natural woods, and by hills abounding in game. In point of society, according to the heartfelt phrase of Scripture, we dwelt "amongst our own people;" and as the distance from the metropolis was only thirty miles, we were not out of reach of our Edinburgh friends, in which city we spent the terms of the summer and winter Sessions of the Court, that is, five or six months in the year.

An important circumstance had, about the same time, taken place in my life. Hopes had been held out to me from an influential quarter, of a nature to relieve me from the anxiety which I must have otherwise felt, as one upon the precarious tenure of whose own life rested the principal prospects of his family, and especially as one who had necessarily some dependence upon the favour of the public, which is proverbially capricious; though it is but justice to add, that, in my own case, I have not found it so. Mr. Pitt had expressed a wish to my personal friend, the Right Honourable William Dundas, now Lord Clerk Register of Scotland, that some fitting opportunity should be taken to be of service to me; and as my views and wishes pointed to a future rather than an immediate provision, an opportunity of accomplishing this was soon found. One of the Principal Clerks of Session, as they are called (official persons who occupy an important and responsible situation, and enjoy a considerable income), who had served upwards of thirty years, felt himself, from age, and the infirmity of deafness with which it was accompanied, desirous of retiring from his official situation. As the law then stood, such official persons were entitled to bargain with their successors, either for a sum of money, which was usually a considerable one, or for an interest in the emoluments of the office during their life. My predecessor, whose services had been unusually meritorious, stipulated for the emoluments of his office during his life, while I should enjoy the survivorship, on the condition that I discharged the duties of the office in the meantime. Mr. Pitt, however, having died in the interval, his administration was dissolved, and was succeeded by that known by the name of the Fox and Grenville Ministry. My affair was so far completed, that my commission lay in the office subscribed by his Majesty; but, from hurry or mistake, the interest of my predecessor was not expressed in it, as had been usual in such cases. Although, therefore, it only required payment of the fees, I could not in honour take out the commission in the present state, since in the event of my dying before him, the gentleman whom I succeeded must have lost the vested interest which he had stipulated to retain. I had the honour of an interview with Earl Spencer on the subject, and he, in the most handsome manner, gave directions that the commission should issue as originally intended; adding, that the matter having received the royal assent, he regarded only as a claim of justice what he would have willingly done as an act of favour. I never saw Mr. Fox on this, or on any other occasion, and never made any application to him, conceiving that in doing so I might have been supposed to express political opinions contrary to those which I had always professed. In his private capacity, there is no man to whom I would have been more proud to owe an obligation, had I been so distinguished.

By this arrangement I obtained the survivorship of an office, the emoluments of which were fully adequate to my wishes; and as the law respecting the mode of providing for superannuated officers was, about five or six years after, altered from that which admitted the arrangement of assistant and successor, my colleague very handsomely took the opportunity of the alteration to accept of the retiring annuity provided in such cases, and admitted me to the full benefit of the office.

But although the certainty of succeeding to a considerable income, at the time I obtained it, seemed to assure me of a quiet harbour in my old age, I did not escape my share of inconvenience from the contrary tides and currents by which we are so often encountered in our journey through life. Indeed the publication of my next poetical attempt was prematurely accelerated, from one of those unpleasant accidents which can neither be foreseen nor avoided.

I had formed the prudent resolution to endeavour to bestow a little more labour than I had yet done on my productions, and to be in no hurry again to announce myself as a candidate for literary fame. Accordingly, particular passages of a poem, which was finally called "Marmion," were laboured with a good deal of care, by one by whom much care was seldom bestowed.

Whether the work was worth the labour or not, I am no competent judge; but I may be permitted to say, that the period of its composition was a very happy one in my life; so much so, that I remember with pleasure, at this moment, some of the spots in which particular passages were composed. It is probably owing to this, that the Introductions to the several Cantos assumed the form of familiar epistles to my intimate friends, in which I alluded, perhaps more than was necessary or grateful, to my domestic occupations and amusements—a loquacity which may be excused by those who remember that I was still young, light-headed, and happy, and that "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."

The misfortunes of a near relation and friend, which happened at this time, led me to alter my prudent determination, which had been, to use great precaution in sending this poem into the world; and made it convenient at least, if not absolutely necessary, to hasten its publication. The publishers of "The Lay of the Last Minstrel," emboldened by the success of that poem, willingly offered a thousand pounds for "Marmion." The transaction being no secret, afforded Lord Byron, who was then at general war with all who blacked paper, an apology for including me in his satire, entitled "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers." I never could conceive how an arrangement between an author and his publishers, if satisfactory to the persons concerned, could afford matter of censure to any third party. I had taken no unusual or ungenerous means of enhancing the value of my merchandise—I had never higgled a moment about the bargain, but accepted at once what I considered the handsome offer of my publishers. These gentlemen, at least, were not of opinion that they had been taken advantage of in the transaction, which, indeed, was one of their own framing; on the contrary, the sale of the Poem was so far beyond their expectation, as to induce them to supply the Author's cellars with what is always an acceptable present to a young Scottish housekeeper, namely, a hogshead of excellent claret.

The Poem was finished in too much haste to allow me an opportunity of softening down, if not removing, some of its most prominent defects. The nature of "Marmion's" guilt, although similar instances were found, and might be quoted, as existing in feudal times, was nevertheless not sufficiently peculiar to be indicative of the character of the period, forgery being the crime of a commercial, rather than of a proud and warlike age. This gross defect ought to have been remedied or palliated. Yet I suffered the tree to lie as it had fallen. I remember my friend, Dr. Leyden, then in the East, wrote me a furious remonstrance on the subject. I have, nevertheless, always been of opinion, that corrections, however in themselves judicious, have a bad effect—after publication. An author is never so decidedly condemned as on his own confession, and may long find apologists and partisans, until he gives up his own cause. I was not, therefore, inclined to afford matter for censure out of my own admissions; and, by good fortune, the novelty of the subject, and, if I may so say, some force and vivacity of description, were allowed to atone for many imperfections. Thus the second experiment on the public patience, generally the most perilous—for the public are then most apt to judge with rigour, what in the first instance they had received, perhaps, with imprudent generosity—was in my case decidedly successful. I had the good fortune to pass this ordeal favourably, and the return of sales before me makes the copies amount to thirty-six thousand printed between 1808 and 1825, besides a considerable sale since that period. I shall here pause upon the subject of "Marmion," and, in a few prefatory words to "The Lady of the Lake," the last poem of mine which obtained eminent success, I will continue the task which I have imposed on myself respecting the origin of my productions.

ABBOTSFORD, *April*, 1830.

MARMION.

INTRODUCTION TO CANTO FIRST.

TO

WILLIAM STEWART ROSE, ESQ.

Ashestiel, Ettrick Forest.

NOVEMBER's sky is chill and drear,
November's leaf is red and sear:
Late, gazing down the steepy linn,
That hems our little garden in,
Low in its dark and narrow glen,
You scarce the rivulet might ken,
So thick the tangled greenwood grew,
So feeble trill'd the streamlet through:
Now, murmuring hoarse, and frequent seen,
Through bush and brier, no longer green,
An angry brook, it sweeps the glade,
Brawls over rock and wild cascade,
And, foaming brown with double speed,
Hurries its waters to the Tweed.

No longer Autumn's glowing red
Upon our forest hills is shed;
No more, beneath the evening beam,
Fair Tweed reflects their purple gleam;
Away hath pass'd the heather-bell
That bloom'd so rich on Needpath Fell;
Sallow his brow, and russet bare
Are now the sister-heights of Yair.
The sheep, before the pinching heaven,
To shelter'd dale and down are driven,
Where yet some faded herbage pines,
And yet a watery sunbeam shines:
In meek despondency they eye
The wither'd sward and wintry sky,
And far beneath their summer hill,
Stray sadly by Glenkinnon's rill:
The shepherd shifts his mantle's fold,
And wraps him closer from the cold;
His dogs no merry circles wheel,
But, shivering, follow at his heel;
A cowering glance they often cast,
As deeper moans the gathering blast.

My imps, though hardy, bold, and wild,
As best befits the mountain child,
Feel the sad influence of the hour,
And wail the daisy's vanish'd flower;
Their summer gambols tell, and mourn,
And anxious ask—Will spring return,
And birds and lambs again be gay,
And blossoms clothe the hawthorn spray?

Yes, prattlers, yes. The daisy's flower
Again shall paint your summer bower;
Again the hawthorn shall supply
The garlands you delight to tie;
The lambs upon the lea shall bound,
The wild birds carol to the round,
And while you frolic light as they,
Too short shall seem the summer day.

To mute and to material things
New life revolving summer brings;
The genial call dead Nature hears,
And in her glory reappears.
But oh! my country's wintry state
What second spring shall renovate?
What powerful call shall bid arise
The buried warlike and the wise;
The mind that thought for Britain's weal,
The hand that grasp'd the victor steel?
The vernal sun new life bestows
Even on the meanest flower that blows;
But vainly, vainly may he shine,
Where glory weeps o'er NELSON's shrine;
And vainly pierce the solemn gloom,
That shrouds, O PITT, thy hallow'd tomb!

Deep graved in every British heart,
O never let those names depart!
Say to your sons—Lo, here his grave,
Who victor died on Gadite wave;†
To him, as to the burning levin,
Short, bright, resistless course was given.
Where'er his country's foes were found,
Was heard the fated thunder's sound,
Till burst the bolt on yonder shore, [more.
Roll'd, blazed, destroy'd,—and was no

Nor mourn ye less his perish'd worth,
Who bade the conqueror go forth,
And launch'd that thunderbolt of war
On Egypt, Hafnia,‡ Trafalgar;

† Nelson. ‡ Copenhagen.

Who, born to guide such high emprize,
For Britain's weal was early wise;
Alas! to whom the Almighty gave,
For Britain's sins, an early grave!
His worth, who, in his mightiest hour,
A bauble held the pride of power,
Spurn'd at the sordid lust of pelf,
And served his Albion for herself;
Who, when the frantic crowd amain
Strain'd at subjection's bursting rein,
O'er their wild mood full conquest gain'd,
The pride, he would not crush, restrain'd,
Show'd their fierce zeal a worthier cause,
And brought the freeman's arm, to aid the freeman's laws.

Had'st thou but lived, though stripp'd of power,
A watchman on the lonely tower,
Thy thrilling trump had roused the land,
When fraud or danger were at hand;
By thee, as by the beacon-light,
Our pilots had kept course aright;
As some proud column, though alone,
Thy strength had propp'd the tottering throne:
Now is the stately column broke,
The beacon-light is quench'd in smoke,
The trumpet's silver sound is still,
The warder silent on the hill!

Oh think, how to his latest day,
When Death, just hovering, claim'd his prey,
With Palinure's unalter'd mood,
Firm at his dangerous post he stood;
Each call for needful rest repell'd,
With dying hand the rudder held,
Till, in his fall, with fateful sway,
The steerage of the realm gave way!
Then, while on Britain's thousand plains
One unpolluted church remains,
Whose peaceful bells ne'er sent around
The bloody tocsin's maddening sound,
But still, upon the hallow'd day,
Convoke the swains to praise and pray;
While faith and civil peace are dear,
Grace this cold marble with a tear,—
He, who preserved them, PITT, lies here!

Nor yet suppress the generous sigh,
Because his rival slumbers nigh;
Nor be thy *requiescat* dumb,
Lest it be said o'er Fox's tomb.
For talents mourn, untimely lost,
When best employ'd, and wanted most;
Mourn genius high, and lore profound,
And wit that loved to play, not wound;
And all the reasoning powers divine,
To penetrate, resolve, combine;
And feelings keen, and fancy's glow,—
They sleep with him who sleeps below:
And, if thou mourn'st they could not save
From error him who owns this grave,
Be every harsher thought suppress'd,
And sacred be the last long rest.
Here, where the end of earthly things
Lays heroes, patriots, bards, and kings;
Where stiff the hand, and still the tongue,
Of those who fought, and spoke, and sung;
Here, where the fretted aisles prolong
The distant notes of holy song,
As if some angel spoke agen,
"All peace on earth, good-will to men;"
If ever from an English heart,
O, *here* let prejudice depart,
And, partial feeling cast aside,
Record, that Fox a Briton died!
When Europe crouch'd to France's yoke,
And Austria bent, and Prussia broke,
And the firm Russian's purpose brave,
Was barter'd by a timorous slave,
Even then dishonour's peace he spurn'd,
The sullied olive branch return'd,
Stood for his country's glory fast,
And nail'd her colours to the mast!
Heaven, to reward his firmness, gave
A portion in this honour'd grave,
And ne'er held marble in its trust
Of two such wondrous men the dust.

With more than mortal powers endow'd,
How high they soar'd above the crowd!
Theirs was no common party race,
Jostling by dark intrigue for place;
Like fabled Gods, their mighty war
Shook realms and nations in its jar;
Beneath each banner proud to stand,
Look'd up the noblest of the land,
Till through the British world were knowr
The names of PITT and FOX alone.
Spells of such force no wizard grave
E'er framed in dark Thessalian cave,
Though his could drain the ocean dry,
And force the planets from the sky.
These spells are spent, and, spent with these,
The wine of life is on the lees.
Genius, and taste, and talent gone,
For ever tomb'd beneath the stone,
Where—taming thought to human pride!—
The mighty chiefs sleep side by side.
Drop upon Fox's grave the tear,
'Twill trickle to his rival's bier;
O'er PITT's the mournful requiem sound,
And FOX's shall the notes rebound.
The solemn echo seems to cry,—
"Here let their discord with them die.
Speak not for those a separate doom,
Whom Fate made brothers in the tomb;
But search the land of living men,
Where wilt thou find their like agen?"

Rest, ardent Spirits! till the cries
Of dying Nature bid you rise;
Not even your Britain's groans can pierce
The leaden silence of your hearse;
Then, O, how impotent and vain
This grateful tributary strain!
Though not unmark'd from northern clime,
Ye heard the Border Minstrel's rhyme:
His Gothic harp has o'er you rung;
The Bard you deign'd to praise, your
deathless names has sung.

Stay yet, illusion, stay a while,
My wilder'd fancy still beguile!
From this high theme how can I part,
Ere half unloaded is my heart!
For all the tears e'er sorrow drew,
And all the raptures fancy knew,
And all the keener rush of blood, [mood,
That throbs through bard in bard-like
Were here a tribute mean and low,
Though all their mingled streams could
flow—
Woe, wonder, and sensation high,
In one spring-tide of ecstasy!—
It will not be—it may not last—
The vision of enchantment 's past:
Like frostwork in the morning ray,
The fancied fabric melts away;
Each Gothic arch, memorial-stone,
And long, dim, lofty aisle, are gone;
And, lingering last, deception dear,
The choir's high sounds die on my ear.
Now slow return the lonely down,
The silent pastures bleak and brown,
The farm begirt with copsewood wild,
The gambols of each frolic child,
Mixing their shrill cries with the tone
Of Tweed's dark waters rushing on.

Prompt on unequal tasks to run,
Thus Nature disciplines her son:
Meeter, she says, for me to stray,
And waste the solitary day,
In plucking from yon fen the reed,
And watch it floating down the Tweed;
Or idly list the shrilling lay,
With which the milkmaid cheers her way,
Marking its cadence rise and fail,
As from the field, beneath her pail,
She trips it down the uneven dale:
Meeter for me, by yonder cairn,
The ancient shepherd's tale to learn;
Though oft he stop in rustic fear,
Lest his old legends tire the ear
Of one who, in his simple mind,
May boast of book-learn'd taste refined.

But thou, my friend, canst fitly tell
(For few have read romance so well)
How still the legendary lay
O'er poet's bosom holds its sway;
How on the ancient minstrel strain
Time lays his palsied hand in vain;
And how our hearts at doughty deeds,
By warriors wrought in steely weeds,
Still throb for fear and pity's sake;
As when the champion of the Lake
Enters Morgana's fated house,
Or in the Chapel Perilous,
Despising spells and demons' force,
Holds converse with the unburied corse;*
Or when, Dame Ganore's grace to move,
(Alas, that lawless was their love!)
He sought proud Tarquin in his den,
And freed full sixty knights; or when,
A sinful man, and unconfess'd,
He took the Sangreal's holy quest,
And, slumbering, saw the vision high,
He might not view with waking eye.*

The mightiest chiefs of British song
Scorn'd not such legends to prolong:
They gleam through Spenser's elfin dream,
And mix in Milton's heavenly theme;
And Dryden, in immortal strain,
Had raised the Table Round again,*
But that a ribald King and Court
Bade him toil on, to make them sport;
Demanded for their niggard pay,
Fit for their souls, a looser lay,
Licentious satire, song, and play;
The world defrauded of the high design,
Profaned the God-given strength, and
marr'd the lofty line.

Warm'd by such names, well may we
then,
Though dwindled sons of little men,
Essay to break a feeble lance
In the fair fields of old romance;
Or seek the moated castle's cell,
Where long through talisman and spell,
While tyrants ruled, and damsels wept,
Thy Genius, Chivalry, hath slept:
There sound the harpings of the North,
Till he awake and sally forth,
On venturous quest to prick again,
In all his arms, with all his train,
Shield, lance, and brand, and plume, and
scarf,
Fay, giant, dragon, squire, and dwarf,
And wizard with his wand of might,
And errant maid on palfrey white.
Around the Genius weave their spells,
Pure Love, who scarce his passion tells;
Mystery, half veil'd and half reveal'd;
And Honour, with his spotless shield;
Attention, with fix'd eye; and Fear,
That loves the tale she shrinks to hear;

* An asterisk in these pages signifies that a note upon the passage is to be found at the end of the volume.

And gentle Courtesy; and Faith,
Unchanged by sufferings, time, or death;
And Valour, lion-mettled lord,
Leaning upon his own good sword.

Well has thy fair achievement shown,
A worthy meed may thus be won;
Ytene's† oaks—beneath whose shade
Their theme the merry minstrels made
Of Aspacart, and Bevis bold,*
And that Red King,‡ who, while of old,
Through Boldrewood the chase he led,
By his loved huntsman's arrow bled—
Ytene's oaks have heard again
Renew'd such legendary strain;
For thou hast sung how He of Gaul,
That Amadis so famed in hall,
For Oriana, foil'd in fight
The Necromancer's felon might;
And well in modern verse hast wove
Partenopex's mystic love:
Hear, then, attentive to my lay,
A knightly tale of Albion's elder day.

CANTO FIRST.

THE CASTLE.

I.

DAY set on Norham's castled steep,*
And Tweed's fair river, broad and deep,
And Cheviot's mountains lone:
The battled towers, the donjon keep,*
The loophole grates, where captives weep,
The flanking walls that round it sweep,
In yellow lustre shone.
The warriors on the turrets high,
Moving athwart the evening sky,
Seem'd forms of giant height:
Their armour, as it caught the rays,
Flash'd back again the western blaze,
In lines of dazzling light.

II.

Saint George's banner, broad and gay,
Now faded, as the fading ray
Less bright, and less, was flung;
The evening gale had scarce the power
To wave it on the Donjon Tower,
So heavily it hung.
The scouts had parted on their search,
The Castle gates were barr'd;
Above the gloomy portal arch,
Timing his footsteps to a march,
The Warder kept his guard;
Low humming, as he paced along,
Some ancient Border gathering song.

† The new forest in Hampshire, anciently so called.

‡ William Rufus.

III.

A distant trampling sound he hears;
He looks abroad, and soon appears,
O'er Horncliff-hill a plump of spears,†
Beneath a pennon gay;
A horseman, darting from the crowd,
Like lightning from a summer cloud,
Spurs on his mettled courser proud,
Before the dark array.
Beneath the sable palisade,
That closed the Castle barricade,
His bugle-horn he blew;
The warder hasted from the wall,
And warn'd the Captain in the hall,
For well the blast he knew;
And joyfully that knight did call,
To sewer, squire, and seneschal.

IV.

"Now broach ye a pipe of Malvoisie,
Bring pasties of the doe,
And quickly make the entrance free,
And bid my heralds ready be,
And every minstrel sound his glee,
And all our trumpets blow;
And, from the platform, spare ye not
To fire a noble salvo-shot;
Lord MARMION waits below!"
Then to the Castle's lower ward
Sped forty yeomen tall,
The iron-studded gates unbarr'd,
Raised the portcullis' ponderous guard,
The lofty palisade unsparr'd,
And let the drawbridge fall.

V.

Along the bridge Lord Marmion rode,
Proudly his red-roan charger trode,
His helm hung at the saddlebow;
Well by his visage you might know
He was a stalworth knight, and keen,
And had in many a battle been:
The scar on his brown cheek reveal'd
A token true of Bosworth field;
His eyebrow dark, and eye of fire,
Show'd spirit proud, and prompt to ire;
Yet lines of thought upon his cheek
Did deep design and counsel speak.
His forehead, by his casque worn bare,
His thick moustache, and curly hair,
Coal-black, and grizzled here and there,
But more through toil than age; [limb,
His square-turn'd joints, and strength of
Show'd him no carpet knight so trim,
But in close fight a champion grim,
In camps a leader sage.

† This word properly applies to a flight of water-fowl; but is applied, by analogy, to a body of horse:—

"There is a knight of the North Country,
Which leads a lusty *plump* of spears."
Flodden.

VI.

Well was he arm'd from head to heel,
In mail and plate of Milan steel;*
But his strong helm, of mighty cost,
Was all with burnish'd gold emboss'd:
Amid the plumage of the crest,
A falcon hover'd on her nest,
With wings outspread, and forward breast:
E'en such a falcon, on his shield,
Soar'd sable in an azure field:
The golden legend bore aright,
"Who checks at me, to death is dight."*
Blue was the charger's broider'd rein;
Blue ribbons deck'd his arching mane;
The knightly housing's ample fold
Was velvet blue, and trapp'd with gold.

VII.

Behind him rode two gallant squires,
Of noble name, and knightly sires;
They burn'd the gilded spurs to claim;
For well could each a war-horse tame,
Could draw the bow, the sword could sway,
And lightly bear the ring away;
Nor less with courteous precepts stored,
Could dance in hall, and carve at board,
And frame love-ditties passing rare,
And sing them to a lady fair.

VIII.

Four men-at-arms came at their backs,
With halbert, bill, and battle-axe:
They bore Lord Marmion's lance so strong,
And led his sumpter-mules along,
And ambling palfrey, when at need
Him listed ease his battle-steed.
The last and trustiest of the four,
On high his forky pennon bore;
Like swallow's tail, in shape and hue,
Flutter'd the streamer glossy blue,
Where, blazon'd sable, as before,
The towering falcon seem'd to soar.
Last, twenty yeomen, two and two,
In hosen black, and jerkins blue,
With falcons broider'd on each breast,
Attended on their lord's behest:
Each, chosen for an archer good,
Knew hunting-craft by lake or wood;
Each one a six-foot bow could bend,
And far a cloth-yard shaft could send;
Each held a boar-spear tough and strong,
And at their belts their quivers rung.
Their dusty palfreys, and array,
Show'd they had march'd a weary way.

IX.

'Tis meet that I should tell you now,
How fairly arm'd, and order'd how,
The soldiers of the guard,
With musket, pike, and morion,
To welcome noble Marmion,
Stood in the Castle-yard;
Minstrels and trumpeters were there,
The gunner held his linstock yare,
For welcome-shot prepared:
Enter'd the train, and such a clang,
As then through all his turrets rang,
Old Norham never heard.

X.

The guards their morrice-pikes advanced,
The trumpets flourish'd brave,
The cannon from the ramparts glanced,
And thundering welcome gave.
A blithe salute, in martial sort,
The minstrels well might sound,
For, as Lord Marmion cross'd the court,
He scatter'd angels round.
"Welcome to Norham, Marmion!
Stout heart, and open hand!
Well dost thou brook thy gallant roan,
Thou flower of English land!"

XI.

Two pursuivants, whom tabarts deck,
With silver scutcheon round their neck,
Stood on the steps of stone,
By which you reach the donjon gate,
And there, with herald pomp and state,
They hail'd Lord Marmion:
They hail'd him Lord of Fontenaye,
Of Lutterward, and Scrivelbaye,
Of Tamworth tower and town;*
And he, their courtesy to requite,
Gave them a chain of twelve marks' weight,
All as he lighted down.
"Now, largesse, largesse,† Lord Marmion,
Knight of the crest of gold!
A blazon'd shield, in battle won,
Ne'er guarded heart so bold."

XII.

They marshall'd him to the Castle-hall,
Where the guests stood all aside,
And loudly flourish'd the trumpet-call,
And the heralds loudly cried,—
"Room, lordings, room for Lord Marmion,
With the crest and helm of gold!
Full well we know the trophies won
In the lists at Cottiswold:
There, vainly Ralph de Wilton strove
'Gainst Marmion's force to stand;
To him he lost his lady-love,
And to the King his land.
Ourselves beheld the listed field,
A sight both sad and fair;
We saw Lord Marmion pierce his shield,
And saw his saddle bare;
We saw the victor win the crest
He wears with worthy pride;
And on the gibbet-tree, reversed,
His foeman's scutcheon tied.

† The cry with which heralds and pursuivants were wont to acknowledge the bounty received from the knights.

Place, nobles, for the Falcon-Knight!
Room, room, ye gentles gay,
For him who conquer'd in the right,
Marmion of Fontenaye!"

XIII.

Then stepp'd to meet that noble Lord,
Sir Hugh the Heron bold,
Baron of Twisell, and of Ford,
And Captain of the Hold.*
He led Lord Marmion to the deas,
Raised o'er the pavement high,
And placed him in the upper place—
They feasted full and high:
The whiles a Northern harper rude
Chanted a rhyme of deadly feud,
"*How the fierce Thirwalls, and Ridleys*
Stout Willimondswick, [*all,*
And Hardriding Dick,
And Hughie of Hawdon, and Will o'
the Wall,
Have set on Sir Albany Featherstonhaugh,
And taken his life at the Deadman's-shaw."
Scantly Lord Marmion's ear could brook
The harper's barbarous lay;
Yet much he praised the pains he took,
And well those pains did pay:
For lady's suit, and minstrel's strain,
By knight should ne'er be heard in vain.

XIV.

"Now, good Lord Marmion," Heron says,
"Of your fair courtesy,
I pray you bide some little space
In this poor tower with me.
Here may you keep your arms from rust,
May breathe your war-horse well;
Seldom hath pass'd a week but giust
Or feat of arms befell:
The Scots can rein a mettled steed,
And love to couch a spear;—
Saint George! a stirring life they lead,
That have such neighbours near.
Then stay with us a little space,
Our northern wars to learn;
I pray you, for your lady's grace!"—
Lord Marmion's brow grew stern.

XV.

The Captain mark'd his alter'd look,
And gave a squire the sign;
A mighty wassail-bowl he took,
And crown'd it high in wine.
"Now pledge me here, Lord Marmion:
But first I pray thee fair,
Where hast thou left that page of thine,
That used to serve thy cup of wine,
Whose beauty was so rare?
When last in Raby towers we met,
The boy I closely eyed,
And often mark'd his cheeks were wet,
With tears he fain would hide:
His was no rugged horse-boy's hand,
To burnish shield or sharpen brand,
Or saddle battle-steed;
But meeter seem'd for lady fair,
To fan her cheek or curl her hair,
Or through embroidery rich and rare,
The slender silk to lead:
His skin was fair, his ringlets gold,
His bosom—when he sigh'd,
The russet doublet's rugged fold
Could scarce repel its pride!
Say, hast thou given that lovely youth
To serve in lady's bower?
Or was the gentle page, in sooth,
A gentle paramour?"

XVI.

Lord Marmion ill could brook such jest;
He roll'd his kindling eye,
With pain his rising wrath suppress'd,
Yet made a calm reply:
"That boy thou thought'st so goodly fair,
He might not brook the northern air.
More of his fate if thou wouldst learn,
I left him sick in Lindisfarn:†
Enough of him.—But, Heron, say,
Why does thy lovely lady gay
Disdain to grace the hall to-day?
Or has that dame, so fair and sage,
Gone on some pious pilgrimage?"—
He spoke in covert scorn, for fame
Whisper'd light tales of Heron's dame.

XVII.

Unmark'd, at least unreck'd, the taunt,
Careless the Knight replied,
"No bird, whose feathers gaily flaunt,
Delights in cage to bide:
Norham is grim and grated close,
Hemm'd in by battlement and fosse,
And many a darksome tower;
And better loves my lady bright
To sit in liberty and light,
In fair Queen Margaret's bower.
We hold our greyhound in our hand,
Our falcon on our glove;
But where shall we find leash or band,
For dame that loves to rove?
Let the wild falcon soar her swing,
She'll stoop when she has tired her wing."

XVIII.

"Nay, if with royal James's bride
The lovely Lady Heron bide,
Behold me here a messenger,
Your tender greetings prompt to bear;
For, to the Scottish court address'd,
I journey at our King's behest,
And pray you, of your grace, provide
For me and mine a trusty guide.

† See Note to page 58.

I have not ridden in Scotland since
James back'd the cause of that mock prince
Warbeck, that Flemish counterfeit,
Who on the gibbet paid the cheat.
Then did I march with Surrey's power,
What time we razed old Ayton Tower."*

XIX.

"For such-like need, my lord, I trow,
Norham can find you guides enow;
For here be some have prick'd as far,
On Scottish ground, as to Dunbar;
Have drunk the monks of St. Bothan's ale,
And driven the beeves of Lauderdale;
Harried the wives of Greenlaw's goods,
And given them light to set their hoods."*

XX.

"Now, in good sooth," Lord Marmion cried,
"Were I in warlike wise to ride,
A better guard I would not lack,
Than your stout forayers at my back;
But, as in form of peace I go,
A friendly messenger, to know
Why through all Scotland, near and far,
Their King is mustering troops for war,
The sight of plundering Border spears
Might justify suspicious fears,
And deadly feud, or thirst of spoil,
Break out in some unseemly broil:
A herald were my fitting guide;
Or friar, sworn in peace to bide;
Or pardoner, or travelling priest,
Or strolling pilgrim, at the least."

XXI.

The Captain mused a little space,
And pass'd his hand across his face.—
"Fain would I find the guide you want,
But ill may spare a pursuivant,
The only men that safe can ride
Mine errands on the Scottish side:
And though a bishop built this fort,
Few holy brethren here resort;
Even our good chaplain, as I ween,
Since our last siege we have not seen:
The mass he might not sing or say,
Upon one stinted meal a-day;
So, safe he sat in Durham aisle,
And pray'd for our success the while.
Our Norham vicar, woe betide,
Is all too well in case to ride.
The priest of Shoreswood*—he could rein
The wildest war-horse in your train;
But then, no spearman in the hall
Will sooner swear, or stab, or brawl.
Friar John of Tillmouth were the man:
A blithesome brother at the can,
A welcome guest in hall and bower,
He knows each castle, town, and tower,
In which the wine and ale is good,
'Twixt Newcastle and Holy-Rood.
But that good man, as ill befalls,
Hath seldom left our castle walls,
Since, on the vigil of Saint Bede,
In evil hour, he cross'd the Tweed,
To teach Dame Alison her creed.
Old Bughtrig found him with his wife;
And John, an enemy to strife,
Sans frock and hood, fled for his life.
The jealous churl hath deeply swore,
That, if again he venture o'er,
He shall shrieve penitent no more.
Little he loves such risks, I know;
Yet, in your guard, perchance will go."

XXII.

Young Selby, at the fair hall-board,
Carved to his uncle and that lord,
And reverently took up the word.
"Kind uncle, woe were we each one,
If harm should hap to brother John.
He is a man of mirthful speech,
Can many a game and gambol teach;
Full well at tables can he play,
And sweep at bowls the stake away.
None can a lustier carol bawl,
The needfullest among us all,
When time hangs heavy in the hall,
And snow comes thick at Christmas tide,
And we can neither hunt, nor ride
A foray on the Scottish side.
The vow'd revenge of Bughtrig rude,
May end in worse than loss of hood.
Let Friar John, in safety, still
In chimney-corner snore his fill,
Roast hissing crabs, or flagons swill:
Last night, to Norham there came one,
Will better guide Lord Marmion."
"Nephew," quoth Heron, "by my fay,
Well hast thou spoke; say forth thy say."

XXIII.

"Here is a holy Palmer come,
From Salem first, and last from Rome;
One that hath kiss'd the blessed tomb,
And visited each holy shrine
In Araby and Palestine;
On hills of Armenie hath been,
Where Noah's ark may yet be seen;
By that Red Sea, too, hath he trod,
Which parted at the prophet's rod;
In Sinai's wilderness he saw
The Mount, where Israel heard the law,
'Mid thunder-dint and flashing levin,
And shadows, mists, and darkness, given.
He shows Saint James's cockle-shell;
Of fair Montserrat, too, can tell;
And of that Grot where Olives nod,
Where, darling of each heart and eye,
From all the youth of Sicily,
Saint Rosalie retired to God.*

XXIV.

"To stout Saint George of Norwich merry,
Saint Thomas, too, of Canterbury,
Cuthbert of Durham and Saint Bede,
For his sins' pardon hath he pray'd.
He knows the passes of the North,
And seeks far shrines beyond the Forth;
Little he eats, and long will wake,
And drinks but of the stream or lake.
This were a guide o'er moor and dale;
But, when our John hath quaff'd his ale,
As little as the wind that blows,
And warms itself against his nose,
Kens he, or cares, which way he goes."

XXV.

"Gramercy!" quoth Lord Marmion,
"Full loth were I that Friar John,
That venerable man, for me
Were placed in fear or jeopardy.
If this same Palmer will me lead
From hence to Holy-Rood,
Like his good saint, I'll pay his meed,
Instead of cockle-shell, or bead,
With angels fair and good.
I love such holy ramblers; still
They know to charm a weary hill,
With song, romance, or lay:
Some jovial tale, or glee, or jest,
Some lying legend, at the least,
They bring to cheer the way."

XXVI.

"Ah! noble sir," young Selby said,
And finger on his lip he laid,
"This man knows much—perchance e'en more
Than he could learn by holy lore.
Still to himself he's muttering,
And shrinks as at some unseen thing.
Last night we listen'd at his cell; [tell,
Strange sounds we heard, and, sooth to
He murmur'd on till morn, howe'er
No living mortal could be near.
Sometimes I thought I heard it plain,
As other voices spoke again.
I cannot tell—I like it not—
Friar John hath told us it is wrote,
No conscience clear, and void of wrong,
Can rest awake, and pray so long.
Himself still sleeps before his beads
Have mark'd ten aves, and two creeds."*

XXVII.

"Let pass," quoth Marmion; "by my fay,
This man shall guide me on my way,
Although the great arch-fiend and he
Had sworn them themselves of company.
So please you, gentle youth, to call
This Palmer* to the Castle-hall."
The summon'd Palmer came in place;
His sable cowl o'erhung his face;
In his black mantle was he clad,
With Peter's keys, in cloth of red,
On his broad shoulders wrought;
The scallop shell his cap did deck;
The crucifix around his neck
Was from Loretto brought;
His sandals were with travel tore,
Staff, budget, bottle, scrip, he wore;
The faded palm-branch in his hand
Show'd pilgrim from the Holy Land.

XXVIII.

When as the Palmer came in hall,
Nor lord, nor knight, was there more tall,
Or had a statelier step withal,
Or look'd more high and keen;
For no saluting did he wait,
But strode across the hall of state,
And fronted Marmion where he sate,
As he his peer had been.
But his gaunt frame was worn with toil;
His cheek was sunk, alas the while!
And when he struggled at a smile,
His eye look'd haggard wild:
Poor wretch! the mother that him bare,
If she had been in presence there,
In his wan face, and sun-burn'd hair,
She had not known her child.
Danger, long travel, want, or woe,
Soon change the form that best we know—
For deadly fear can time outgo,
And blanch at once the hair;
Hard toil can roughen form and face,
And want can quench the eye's bright grace,
Nor does old age a wrinkle trace
More deeply than despair.
Happy whom none of these befall,
But this poor Palmer knew them all.

XXIX.

Lord Marmion then his boon did ask;
The Palmer took on him the task,
So he would march with morning tide,
To Scottish court to be his guide.
"But I have solemn vows to pay,
And may not linger by the way,
To fair St. Andrews bound,
Within the ocean-cave to pray,
Where good Saint Rule his holy lay,
From midnight to the dawn of day,
Sung to the billows' sound;*
Thence to Saint Fillan's blessèd well,
Whose spring can frenzied dreams dispel,
And the crazed brain restore:*
Saint Mary grant, that cave or spring
Could back to peace my bosom bring,
Or bid it throb no more!"

XXX.

And now the midnight draught of sleep,
Where wine and spices richly steep,
In massive bowl of silver deep,
The page presents on knee.

Lord Marmion drank a fair good rest,
The Captain pledged his noble guest,
The cup went through among the rest,
Who drain'd it merrily;
Alone the Palmer pass'd it by,
Though Selby press'd him courteously.
This was a sign the feast was o'er;
It hush'd the merry wassel roar,
The minstrels ceased to sound.
Soon in the castle nought was heard,
But the slow footstep of the guard,
Pacing his sober round.

XXXI.

With early dawn Lord Marmion rose:
And first the chapel doors unclose;
Then, after morning rites were done
(A hasty mass from Friar John),
And knight and squire had broke their fast
On rich substantial repast,
Lord Marmion's bugles blew to horse:
Then came the stirrup-cup in course:
Between the Baron and his host,
No point of courtesy was lost;
High thanks were by Lord Marmion paid,
Solemn excuse the Captain made,
Till, filing from the gate, had pass'd
That noble train, their Lord the last.
Then loudly rung the trumpet call;
Thunder'd the cannon from the wall,
And shook the Scottish shore;
Around the castle eddied slow,
Volumes of smoke as white as snow,
And hid its turrets hoar;
Till they roll'd forth upon the air,
And met the river breezes there,
Which gave again the prospect fair.

INTRODUCTION TO CANTO SECOND.

TO

THE REV. JOHN MARRIOTT, A.M.

Ashestiel, Ettrick Forest.

THE scenes are desert now, and bare,
Where flourish'd once a forest fair,*
When these waste glens with copse were lined,
And peopled with the hart and hind.
Yon Thorn—perchance whose prickly spears
Have fenced him for three hundred years,
While fell around his green compeers—
Yon lonely Thorn, would he could tell
The changes of his parent dell,
Since he, so grey and stubborn now,
Waved in each breeze a sapling bough;
Would he could tell how deep the shade
A thousand mingled branches made;
How broad the shadows of the oak,
How clung the rowan† to the rock,
And through the foliage show'd his head,
With narrow leaves and berries red;
What pines on every mountain sprung,
O'er every dell what birches hung,
In every breeze what aspens shook,
What alders shaded every brook!

"Here, in my shade," methinks he'd say,
"The mighty stag at noon-tide lay:
The wolf I've seen, a fiercer game
(The neighbouring dingle bears his name),
With lurching step around me prowl,
And stop, against the moon to howl;
The mountain-boar, on battle set,
His tusks upon my stem would whet;
While doe, and roe, and red-deer good,
Have bounded by, through gay green-wood.
Then oft, from Newark's riven tower,
Sallied a Scottish monarch's power:
A thousand vassals muster'd round,
With horse, and hawk, and horn, and hound;
And I might see the youth intent,
Guard every pass with crossbow bent;
And through the brake the rangers stalk,
And falc'ners hold the ready hawk;
And foresters, in green-wood trim,
Lead in the leash the gazehounds grim,
Attentive, as the bratchet's‡ bay
From the dark covert drove the prey,
To slip them as he broke away.
The startled quarry bounds amain,
As fast the gallant greyhounds strain;
Whistles the arrow from the bow,
Answers the harquebuss below;
While all the rocking hills reply,
To hoof-clang, hound, and hunters' cry,
And bugles ringing lightsomely."

Of such proud huntings, many tales
Yet linger in our lonely dales,
Up pathless Ettrick and on Yarrow,
Where erst the outlaw drew his arrow.
But not more blithe that silvan court,
Than we have been at humbler sport;
Though small our pomp, and mean our game,
Our mirth, dear Marriott, was the same.
Remember'st thou my greyhounds true?
O'er holt or hill there never flew,
From slip or leash there never sprang,
More fleet of foot, or sure of fang.
Nor dull, between each merry chase,
Pass'd by the intermitted space;
For we had fair resource in store,
In Classic and in Gothic lore:

† Mountain ash. ‡ Slowhound.

We mark'd each memorable scene,
And held poetic talk between;
Nor hill, nor brook, we paced along,
But had its legend or its song.
All silent now—for now are still
Thy bowers, untenanted Bowhill!†
No longer, from thy mountains dun,
The yeoman hears the well-known gun,
And while his honest heart glows warm,
At thought of his paternal farm,
Round to his mates a brimmer fills,
And drinks, "The Chieftain of the Hills!"
No fairy forms, in Yarrow's bowers,
Trip o'er the walks, or tend the flowers,
Fair as the elves whom Janet saw
By moonlight dance on Carterhaugh;
No youthful Baron's left to grace
The Forest-Sheriff's lonely chase,
And ape, in manly step and tone,
The majesty of Oberon:
And she is gone, whose lovely face
Is but her least and lowest grace;‡
Though if to Sylphid Queen 'twere given,
To show our earth the charms of Heaven,
She could not glide along the air,
With form more light, or face more fair.
No more the widow's deafen'd ear
Grows quick that lady's step to hear:
At noon-tide she expects her not,
Nor busies her to trim the cot;
Pensive she turns her humming wheel,
Or pensive cooks her orphans' meal;
Yet blesses, ere she deals their bread,
The gentle hand by which they're fed.

From Yair—which hills so closely bind,
Scarce can the Tweed his passage find,
Though much he fret, and chafe, and toil,
Till all his eddying currents boil—
Her long-descended lord§ is gone,
And left us by the stream alone.
And much I miss those sportive boys,‖
Companions of my mountain joys,
Just at the age 'twixt boy and youth,
When thought is speech, and speech is truth.
Close to my side, with what delight
They press'd to hear of Wallace wight,
When, pointing to his airy mound,
I call'd his ramparts holy ground!††

Kindled their brows to hear me speak;
And I have smiled, to feel my cheek,
Despite the difference of our years,
Return again the glow of theirs.
Ah, happy boys! such feelings pure,
They will not, cannot, long endure;
Condemn'd to stem the world's rude tide,
You may not linger by the side;
For Fate shall thrust you from the shore,
And Passion ply the sail and oar.
Yet cherish the remembrance still,
Of the lone mountain, and the rill;
For trust, dear boys, the time will come,
When fiercer transport shall be dumb,
And you will think right frequently
But, well I hope, without a sigh,
On the free hours that we have spent
Together, on the brown hill's bent.

When, musing on companions gone,
We doubly feel ourselves alone,
Something, my friend, we yet may gain;
There is a pleasure in this pain:
It soothes the love of lonely rest,
Deep in each gentler heart impress'd.
'Tis silent amid worldly toils,
And stifled soon by mental broils;
But, in a bosom thus prepared,
Its still small voice is often heard,
Whispering a mingled sentiment,
'Twixt resignation and content.
Oft in my mind such thoughts awake,
By lone Saint Mary's silent lake;*
Thou know'st it well,—nor fen, nor sedge,
Pollute the pure lake's crystal edge;
Abrupt and sheer, the mountains sink
At once upon the level brink;
And just a trace of silver sand
Marks where the water meets the land.
Far in the mirror, bright and blue,
Each hill's huge outline you may view;
Shaggy with heath, but lonely bare,
Nor tree, nor bush, nor brake, is there,
Save where, of land, yon slender line
Bears 'thwart the lake the scatter'd pine.
Yet even this nakedness has power,
And aids the feeling of the hour:
Nor thicket, dell, nor copse you spy,
Where living thing conceal'd might lie;
Nor point, retiring, hides a dell,
Where swain, or woodman lone, might dwell;
There's nothing left to fancy's guess,
You see that all is loneliness:
And silence aids—though the steep hills
Send to the lake a thousand rills;
In summer tide, so soft they weep,
The sound but lulls the ear asleep;
Your horse's hoof-tread sounds too rude,
So stilly is the solitude.

† A seat of the Duke of Buccleuch on the Yarrow.

‡ Harriet, Countess of Dalkeith, afterwards Duchess of Buccleuch.

§ The late Alexander Pringle, Esq. of Whytbank.

‖ The sons of Mr. Pringle of Whytbank.

†† On a high mountainous ridge above the farm of Ashestiel is a fosse called Wallace's Trench.

Nought living meets the eye or ear,
But well I ween the dead are near;
For though, in feudal strife, a foe
Hath laid Our Lady's chapel low,*
Yet still, beneath the hallow'd soil,
The peasant rests him from his toil,
And, dying, bids his bones be laid,
Where erst his simple fathers pray'd.

If age had tamed the passions' strife,
And fate had cut my ties to life, [dwell,
Here, have I thought, 'twere sweet to
And rear again the chaplain's cell,
Like that same peaceful hermitage,
Where Milton long'd to spend his age.
'Twere sweet to mark the setting day
On Bourhope's lonely top decay;
And, as it faint and feeble died
On the broad lake, and mountain's side,
To say, "Thus pleasures fade away;
Youth, talents, beauty, thus decay,
And leave us dark, forlorn, and grey;"
Then gaze on Dryhope's ruin'd tower,
And think on Yarrow's faded Flower:
And when that mountain-sound I heard,
Which bids us be for storm prepared,
The distant rustling of his wings,
As up his force the Tempest brings,
'Twere sweet, ere yet his terrors rave,
To sit upon the Wizard's grave— [thrust
That Wizard-Priest's, whose bones are
From company of holy dust;*
On which no sunbeam ever shines
(So superstition's creed divines)—
Thence view the lake, with sullen roar,
Heave her broad billows to the shore;
And mark the wild swans mount the gale,
Spread wide through mist their snowy sail,
And ever stoop again, to lave
Their bosoms on the surging wave:
Then, when against the driving hail
No longer might my plaid avail,
Back to my lonely home retire,
And light my lamp, and trim my fire;
There ponder o'er some mystic lay,
Till the wild tale had all its sway,
And, in the bittern's distant shriek,
I heard unearthly voices speak,
And thought the Wizard-Priest was come,
To claim again his ancient home!
And bade my busy fancy range,
To frame him fitting shape and strange,
Till from the task my brow I clear'd,
And smiled to think that I had fear'd.

But chief, 'twere sweet to think such life
(Though but escape from fortune's strife),
Something most matchless good and wise,
A great and grateful sacrifice;
And deem each hour to musing given,
A step upon the road to heaven.

Yet him, whose heart is ill at ease,
Such peaceful solitudes displease:
He loves to drown his bosom's jar
Amid the elementary war:
And my black Palmer's choice had been
Some ruder and more savage scene,
Like that which frowns round dark Loch-
skene.*
There eagles scream from isle to shore;
Down all the rocks the torrents roar;
O'er the black waves incessant driven,
Dark mists infect the summer heaven;
Through the rude barriers of the lake,
Away its hurrying waters break,
Faster and whiter dash and curl,
Till down yon dark abyss they hurl.
Rises the fog-smoke white as snow,
Thunders the viewless stream below,
Diving, as if condemn'd to lave
Some demon's subterranean cave,
Who, prison'd by enchanter's spell,
Shakes the dark rock with groan and yell.
And well that Palmer's form and mien
Had suited with the stormy scene,
Just on the edge, straining his ken
To view the bottom of the den,
Where, deep deep down, and far within,
Toils with the rocks the roaring linn;
Then, issuing forth one foamy wave,
And wheeling round the Giant's Grave,
White as the snowy charger's tail,
Drives down the pass of Moffatdale.

Marriott, thy harp, on Isis strung,
To many a Border theme has rung:
Then list to me, and thou shalt know
Of this mysterious Man of Woe.

CANTO SECOND.

THE CONVENT.

I.

THE breeze, which swept away the smoke,
Round Norham Castle roll'd,
When all the loud artillery spoke,
With lightning-flash, and thunder-stroke,
As Marmion left the Hold.
It curl'd not Tweed alone, that breeze,
For, far upon Northumbrian seas,
It freshly blew, and strong,
Where, from high Whitby's cloister'd pile,
Bound to Saint Cuthbert's Holy Isle,*
It bore a bark along.
Upon the gale she stoop'd her side,
And bounded o'er the swelling tide,
As she were dancing home;
The merry seamen laugh'd, to see
Their gallant ship so lustily
Furrow the green sea-foam.

Much joy'd they in their honour'd freight;
For, on the deck, in chair of state,
The Abbess of Saint Hilda placed,
With five fair nuns, the galley graced.

II.

'Twas sweet to see these holy maids,
Like birds escaped to green-wood shades,
Their first flight from the cage,
How timid, and how curious too,
For all to them was strange and new,
And all the common sights they view,
Their wonderment engage.
One eyed the shrouds and swelling sail,
With many a benedicite;
One at the rippling surge grew pale,
And would for terror pray;
Then shriek'd, because the sea-dog, nigh,
His round black head, and sparkling eye,
Rear'd o'er the foaming spray;
And one would still adjust her veil,
Disorder'd by the summer gale,
Perchance lest some more worldly eye
Her dedicated charms might spy;
Perchance, because such action graced
Her fair-turn'd arm and slender waist.
Light was each simple bosom there,
Save two, who ill might pleasure share,—
The Abbess, and the Novice Clare.

III.

The Abbess was of noble blood,
But early took the veil and hood,
Ere upon life she cast a look,
Or knew the world that she forsook.
Fair too she was, and kind had been
As she was fair, but ne'er had seen
For her a timid lover sigh,
Nor knew the influence of her eye.
Love, to her ear, was but a name,
Combined with vanity and shame;
Her hopes, her fears, her joys, were all
Bounded within the cloister wall:
The deadliest sin her mind could reach,
Was of monastic rule the breach;
And her ambition's highest aim
To emulate Saint Hilda's fame.
For this she gave her ample dower,
To raise the convent's eastern tower;
For this, with carving rare and quaint,
She deck'd the chapel of the saint,
And gave the relic-shrine of cost,
With ivory and gems emboss'd.
The poor her Convent's bounty blest,
The pilgrim in its halls found rest.

IV.

Black was her garb, her rigid rule
Reform'd on Benedictine school;
Her cheek was pale, her form was spare;
Vigils, and penitence austere,
Had early quench'd the light of youth,
But gentle was the dame, in sooth;
Though vain of her religious sway,
She loved to see her maids obey;
Yet nothing stern was she in cell,
And the nuns loved their Abbess well.
Sad was this voyage to the dame;
Summon'd to Lindisfarne, she came,
There, with Saint Cuthbert's Abbot old,
And Tynemouth's Prioress, to hold
A chapter of Saint Benedict,
For inquisition stern and strict,
On two apostates from the faith,
And, if need were, to doom to death.

V.

Nought say I here of Sister Clare,
Save this, that she was young and fair;
As yet a novice unprofess'd,
Lovely and gentle, but distress'd.
She was betroth'd to one now dead,
Or worse, who had dishonour'd fled.
Her kinsmen bade her give her hand
To one, who loved her for her land:
Herself, almost heart-broken now,
Was bent to take the vestal vow,
And shroud, within Saint Hilda's gloom,
Her blasted hopes and wither'd bloom.

VI.

She sate upon the galley's prow,
And seem'd to mark the waves below;
Nay, seem'd, so fix'd her look and eye,
To count them as they glided by.
She saw them not—'twas seeming all—
Far other scene her thoughts recall,—
A sun-scorch'd desert, waste and bare,
Nor waves, nor breezes, murmur'd there;
There saw she—where some careless hand
O'er a dead corpse had heaped the sand,
To hide it till the jackals come,
To tear it from the scanty tomb.—
See what a woful look was given,
As she raised up her eyes to heaven!

VII.

Lovely, and gentle, and distress'd—
These charms might tame the fiercest breast;
Harpers have sung, and poets told,
That he, in fury uncontroll'd,
The shaggy monarch of the wood,
Before a virgin, fair and good,
Hath pacified his savage mood.
But passions in the human frame
Oft put the lion's rage to shame:
And jealousy, by dark intrigue,
With sordid avarice in league,
Had practised with their bowl and knife
Against the mourner's harmless life.
This crime was charged 'gainst those who lay
Prison'd in Cuthbert's islet grey.

VIII.

And now the vessel skirts the strand
Of mountainous Northumberland;

Towns, towers, and halls, successive rise,
And catch the nuns' delighted eyes.
Monk-Wearmouth soon behind them lay;
And Tynemouth's priory and bay;
They mark'd, amid her trees, the hall
Of lofty Seaton-Delaval;
They saw the Blythe and Wansbeck floods
Rush to the sea through sounding woods;
They pass'd the tower of Widderington,
Mother of many a valiant son;
At Coquet-isle their beads they tell
To the good Saint who owned the cell;
Then did the Alne attention claim,
And Warkworth, proud of Percy's name;
And next, they cross'd themselves, to hear
The whitening breakers sound so near,
Where, boiling through the rocks, they roar,
On Dunstanborough's cavern'd shore;
Thy tower, proud Bamborough, mark'd they there,
King Ida's castle, huge and square,
From its tall rock look grimly down,
And on the swelling ocean frown;
Then from the coast they bore away,
And reach'd the Holy Island's bay.

IX.

The tide did now its flood-mark gain,
And girdled in the Saint's domain:
For, with the flow and ebb, its style
Varies from continent to isle;
Dry-shod, o'er sands, twice every day,
The pilgrims to the shrine find way;
Twice every day, the waves efface
Of staves and sandall'd feet the trace.
As to the port the galley flew,
Higher and higher rose to view
The Castle with its battled walls,
The ancient Monastery's halls,
A solemn, huge, and dark-red pile,
Placed on the margin of the isle.

X.

In Saxon strength that Abbey frown'd,
With massive arches broad and round,
That rose alternate, row and row,
On ponderous columns, short and low,
Built ere the art was known,
By pointed aisle, and shafted stalk,
The arcades of an alley'd walk
To emulate in stone.
On the deep walls, the heathen Dane
Had pour'd his impious rage in vain;
And needful was such strength to these,
Exposed to the tempestuous seas,
Scourged by the winds' eternal sway,
Open to rovers fierce as they,
Which could twelve hundred years with-[stand
Winds, waves, and northern pirates' hand.
Not but that portions of the pile,
Rebuilded in a later style,
Show'd where the spoiler's hand had been;
Not but the wasting sea-breeze keen
Had worn the pillar's carving quaint,
And moulder'd in his niche the saint,
And rounded, with consuming power,
The pointed angles of each tower;
Yet still entire the Abbey stood,
Like veteran, worn, but unsubdued.

XI.

Soon as they near'd his turrets strong,
The maidens raised Saint Hilda's song,
And with the sea-wave and the wind,
Their voices, sweetly shrill, combined,
And made harmonious close;
Then, answering from the sandy shore,
Half-drown'd amid the breakers' roar,
According chorus rose:
Down to the haven of the Isle,
The monks and nuns in order file,
From Cuthbert's cloisters grim;
Banner, and cross, and relics there,
To meet Saint Hilda's maids, they bare;
And, as they caught the sounds on air,
They echoed back the hymn.
The islanders, in joyous mood,
Rush'd emulously through the flood,
To hale the bark to land;
Conspicuous by her veil and hood,
Signing the cross, the Abbess stood,
And bless'd them with her hand.

XII.

Suppose we now the welcome said,
Suppose the Convent banquet made:
All through the holy dome,
Through cloister, aisle, and gallery,
Wherever vestal maid might pry,
Nor risk to meet unhallow'd eye,
The stranger sisters roam:
Till fell the evening damp with dew,
And the sharp sea-breeze coldly blew,
For there, even summer night is chill.
Then, having stray'd and gazed their fill,
They closed around the fire;
And all, in turn, essay'd to paint
The rival merits of their saint,
A theme that ne'er can tire
A holy maid; for, be it known,
That their saint's honour is their own.

XIII.

Then Whitby's nuns exulting told,
How to their house three Barons bold
Must menial service do;
While horns blow out a note of shame,
And monks cry "Fie upon your name!
In wrath, for loss of sylvan game,
Saint Hilda's priest ye slew."—
"This, on Ascension-day, each year,
While labouring on our harbour-pier,
Must Herbert, Bruce, and Percy hear."—

They told, how in their convent cell
A Saxon princess once did dwell,
The lovely Edelfled.*
And how, of thousand snakes, each one
Was changed into a coil of stone,
When holy Hilda pray'd;
Themselves, within their holy bound,
Their stony folds had often found.
They told, how sea-fowls' pinions fail,
As over Whitby's towers they sail,*
And, sinking down, with flutterings faint,
They do their homage to the saint.

XIV.

Nor did Saint Cuthbert's daughters fail
To vie with these in holy tale;
His body's resting-place of old,
How oft their patron changed, they told;*
How, when the rude Dane burn'd their pile,
The monks fled forth from Holy Isle;
O'er northern mountain, marsh, and moor,
From sea to sea, from shore to shore,
Seven years Saint Cuthbert's corpse they bore.
They rested them in fair Melrose;
But though, alive, he loved it well,
Not there his relics might repose;
For, wondrous tale to tell!
In his stone-coffin forth he rides,
A ponderous bark for river tides,
Yet light as gossamer it glides,
Downward to Tillmouth cell.
Nor long was his abiding there,
For southward did the saint repair;
Chester-le-Street, and Rippon, saw
His holy corpse, ere Wardilaw
Hail'd him with joy and fear;
And, after many wanderings past,
He chose his lordly seat at last,
Where his cathedral, huge and vast,
Looks down upon the Wear:
There, deep in Durham's Gothic shade,
His relics are in secret laid;
But none may know the place,
Save of his holiest servants three,
Deep sworn to solemn secrecy,
Who share that wondrous grace.

XV.

Who may his miracles declare!
Even Scotland's dauntless king, and heir
(Although with them they led
Galwegians, wild as ocean's gale,
And Lodon's knights, all sheathed in mail,
And the bold men of Teviotdale),
Before his standard fled.*
'Twas he, to vindicate his reign,
Edged Alfred's falchion on the Dane,
And turn'd the Conqueror back again,*
When, with his Norman bowyer band,
He came to waste Northumberland.

XVI.

But fain Saint Hilda's nuns would learn
If, on a rock, by Lindisfarne,
Saint Cuthbert sits, and toils to frame
The sea-born beads that bear his name:*
Such tales had Whitby's fishers told,
And said they might his shape behold,
And hear his anvil sound;
A deaden'd clang,—a huge dim form,
Seen but, and heard, when gathering storm
And night were closing round.
But this, as tale of idle fame,
The nuns of Lindisfarne disclaim.

XVII.

While round the fire such legends go,
Far different was the scene of woe,
Where, in a secret aisle beneath,
Council was heard of life and death.
It was more dark and lone that vault,
Than the worst dungeon cell:
Old Colwulf* built it, for his fault,
In penitence to dwell,
When he, for cowl and beads, laid down
The Saxon battle-axe and crown.
This den, which, chilling every sense
Of feeling, hearing, sight,
Was call'd the Vault of Penitence,
Excluding air and light,
Was, by the prelate Sexhelm, made
A place of burial for such dead,
As, having died in mortal sin,
Might not be laid the church within.
'Twas now a place of punishment;
Whence if so loud a shriek were sent,
As reach'd the upper air,
The hearers bless'd themselves, and said,
The spirits of the sinful dead
Bemoan'd their torments there.

XVIII.

But though, in the monastic pile,
Did of this penitential aisle
Some vague tradition go,
Few only, save the Abbot, knew
Where the place lay; and still more few
Were those who had from him the clew
To that dread vault to go.
Victim and executioner
Were blindfold when transported there.
In low dark rounds the arches hung,
From the rude rock the side-walls sprung;
The grave-stones, rudely sculptured o'er,
Half sunk in earth, by time half wore,
Were all the pavement of the floor;
The mildew-drops fell one by one,
With tinkling plash, upon the stone.
A cresset,† in an iron chain,
Which served to light this drear domain,

† Antique chandelier.

With damp and darkness seem'd to strive,
As if it scarce might keep alive;
And yet it dimly served to show
The awful conclave met below.

XIX.

There, met to doom in secrecy,
Were placed the heads of convents three:
All servants of St. Benedict,
The statutes of whose order strict
On iron table lay;
In long black dress, on seats of stone,
Behind were these three judges shown
By the pale cresset's ray:
The Abbess of Saint Hilda's, there,
Sat for a space with visage bare,
Until, to hide her bosom's swell,
And tear-drops that for pity fell,
She closely drew her veil:
Yon shrouded figure, as I guess,
By her proud mien and flowing dress,
Is Tynemouth's haughty Prioress,*
And she with awe looks pale:
And he, that Ancient Man, whose sight
Has long been quench'd by age's night,
Upon whose wrinkled brow alone,
Nor ruth, nor mercy's trace is shown,
Whose look is hard and stern,—
Saint Cuthbert's Abbot is his style;
For sanctity call'd, through the isle,
The Saint of Lindisfarne.

XX.

Before them stood a guilty pair;
But, though an equal fate they share,
Yet one alone deserves our care.
Her sex a page's dress belied;
The cloak and doublet, loosely tied,
Obscured her charms, but could not hide.
Her cap down o'er her face she drew;
And, on her doublet breast,
She tried to hide the badge of blue,
Lord Marmion's falcon crest.
But, at the Prioress' command,
A Monk undid the silver band,
That tied her tresses fair,
And raised the bonnet from her head,
And down her slender form they spread,
In ringlets rich and rare.
Constance de Beverley they know,
Sister profess'd of Fontevraud,
Whom the church number'd with the dead,
For broken vows, and convent fled.

XXI.

When thus her face was given to view
(Although so pallid was her hue,
It did a ghastly contrast bear
To those bright ringlets glistering fair),
Her look composed, and steady eye,
Bespoke a matchless constancy;
And there she stood so calm and pale,
That, but her breathing did not fail,
And motion slight of eye and head,
And of her bosom, warranted
That neither sense nor pulse she lacks,
You might have thought a form of wax,
Wrought to the very life, was there;
So still she was, so pale, so fair.

XXII.

Her comrade was a sordid soul,
Such as does murder for a meed;
Who, but of fear, knows no control,
Because his conscience, sear'd and foul,
Feels not the import of his deed;
One, whose brute-feeling ne'er aspires
Beyond his own more brute desires.
Such tools the tempter ever needs,
To do the savagest of deeds;
For them no vision'd terrors daunt,
Their nights no fancied spectres haunt,
One fear with them, of all most base,
The fear of death,—alone finds place.
This wretch was clad in frock and cowl,
And shamed not loud to moan and howl,
His body on the floor to dash,
And crouch, like hound beneath the lash;
While his mute partner, standing near,
Waited her doom without a tear.

XXIII.

Yet well the luckless wretch might shriek,
Well might her paleness terror speak!
For there were seen in that dark wall,
Two niches, narrow, deep, and tall;—
Who enters at such grisly door,
Shall ne'er, I ween, find exit more.
In each a slender meal was laid,
Of roots, of water, and of bread:
By each, in Benedictine dress,
Two haggard monks stood motionless;
Who, holding high a blazing torch,
Show'd the grim entrance of the porch:
Reflecting back the smoky beam,
The dark-red walls and arches gleam.
Hewn stones and cement were display'd,
And building tools in order laid.

XXIV.

These executioners were chose,
As men who were with mankind foes,
And with despite and envy fired,
Into the cloister had retired;
Or who, in desperate doubt of grace,
Strove, by deep penance, to efface
Of some foul crime the stain;
For, as the vassals of her will,
Such men the Church selected still,
As either joy'd in doing ill,
Or thought more grace to gain,
If, in her cause, they wrestled down
Feelings their nature strove to own.
By strange device were they brought there,
They knew not how, nor knew not where.

XXV.

And now that blind old Abbot rose,
To speak the Chapter's doom
On those the wall was to enclose,
Alive, within the tomb ;*
But stopp'd, because that woful Maid,
Gathering her powers, to speak essay'd.
Twice she essay'd, and twice in vain ;
Her accents might no utterance gain ;
Nought but imperfect murmurs slip
From her convulsed and quivering lip ;
'Twixt each attempt all was so still,
You seemed to hear a distant rill—
'Twas ocean's swells and falls ;
For though this vault of sin and fear
Was to the sounding surge so near,
A tempest there you scarce could hear,
So massive were the walls.

XXVI.

At length, an effort sent apart
The blood that curdled to her heart,
And light came to her eye,
And colour dawn'd upon her cheek,
A hectic and a flutter'd streak,
Like that left on the Cheviot peak,
By Autumn's stormy sky ;
And when her silence broke at length,
Still as she spoke she gather'd strength,
And arm'd herself to bear.
It was a fearful sight to see
Such high resolve and constancy,
In form so soft and fair.

XXVII.

"I speak not to implore your grace ;
Well know I, for one minute's space
Successless might I sue :
Nor do I speak your prayers to gain ;
For if a death of lingering pain,
To cleanse my sins, be penance vain,
Vain are your masses too.—
I listened to a traitor's tale,
I left the convent and the veil ;
For three long years I bow'd my pride,
A horse-boy in his train to ride ;
And well my folly's meed he gave,
Who forfeited, to be his slave,
All here, and all beyond the grave.—
He saw young Clara's face more fair,
He knew her of broad lands the heir,
Forgot his vows, his faith forswore,
And Constance was beloved no more.—
'Tis an old tale, and often told ;
But did my fate and wish agree,
Ne'er had been read, in story old,
Of maiden true betray'd for gold,
That loved, or was avenged, like me!

XXVIII.

"The King approved his favourite's aim ;
In vain a rival barr'd his claim,
Whose fate with Clare's was plight,
For he attaints that rival's fame
With treason's charge—and on they came,
In mortal lists to fight.
Their oaths are said,
Their prayers are pray'd,
Their lances in the rests are laid
They meet in mortal shock.
And, hark ! the throng, with thundering cry,
Shout 'Marmion, Marmion ! to the sky,
De Wilton to the block !'
Say ye, who preach Heaven shall decide
When in the lists two champions ride,
Say, was Heaven's justice here ?
When, loyal in his love and faith,
Wilton found overthrow or death,
Beneath a traitor's spear ?
How false the charge, how true he fell,
This guilty packet best can tell."—
Then drew a packet from her breast,
Paused, gather'd voice, and spoke the rest.

XXIX.

"Still was false Marmion's bridal staid ;
To Whitby's convent fled the maid,
The hated match to shun.
'Ho ! shifts she thus?' King Henry cried,
'Sir Marmion, she shall be thy bride,
If she were sworn a nun.'
One way remain'd—the King's command
Sent Marmion to the Scottish land :
I linger'd here, and rescue plann'd
For Clara and for me :
This caitiff Monk, for gold, did swear,
He would to Whitby's shrine repair,
And, by his drugs, my rival fair
A saint in heaven should be.
But ill the dastard kept his oath,
Whose cowardice has undone us both.

XXX.

"And now my tongue the secret tells,
Not that remorse my bosom swells,
But to assure my soul that none
Shall ever wed with Marmion.
Had fortune my last hope betray'd,
This packet, to the King convey'd,
Had given him to the headsman's stroke,
Although my heart that instant broke.—
Now, men of death, work forth your will,
For I can suffer, and be still ;
And come he slow, or come he fast,
It is but Death who comes at last.

XXXI.

"Yet dread me, from my living tomb,
Ye vassal slaves of bloody Rome !
If Marmion's late remorse should wake,
Full soon such vengeance will he take,
That you shall wish the fiery Dane
Had rather been your guest again.
Behind, a darker hour ascends !
The altars quake, the crosier bends,

The ire of a despotic King
Rides forth upon destruction's wing;
Then shall these vaults, so strong and deep,
Burst open to the sea-winds' sweep;
Some traveller then shall find my bones
Whitening amid disjointed stones,
And, ignorant of priests' cruelty,
Marvel such relics here should be."

XXXII.

Fix'd was her look, and stern her air:
Back from her shoulders streamed her hair;
The locks, that wont her brow to shade,
Stared up erectly from her head;
Her figure seem'd to rise more high;
Her voice, despair's wild energy
Had given a tone of prophecy.
Appall'd the astonish'd conclave sate;
With stupid eyes, the men of fate
Gazed on the light inspired form,
And listen'd for the avenging storm;
The judges felt the victim's dread;
No hand was moved, no word was said,
Till thus the Abbot's doom was given,
Raising his sightless balls to heaven:—
"Sister, let thy sorrows cease;
Sinful brother, part in peace!"†
From that dire dungeon, place of doom,
Of execution too, and tomb,
Paced forth the judges three;
Sorrow it were, and shame, to tell
The butcher-work that there befell,
When they had glided from the cell
Of sin and misery.

XXXIII.

An hundred winding steps convey
That conclave to the upper day;
But, ere they breathed the fresher air,
They heard the shriekings of despair,
And many a stifled groan:
With speed their upward way they take
(Such speed as age and fear can make),
And cross'd themselves for terror's sake,
As hurrying, tottering on:
Even in the vesper's heavenly tone,
They seem'd to hear a dying groan,
And bade the passing knell to toll
For welfare of a parting soul.
Slow o'er the midnight wave it swung,
Northumbrian rocks in echo rung,
To Warkworth cell the echoes roll'd,
His beads the wakeful hermit told,
The Bamborough peasant raised his head,
But slept ere half a prayer he said;
So far was heard the mighty knell,
The stag sprung up on Cheviot fell,
Spread his broad nostril to the wind,
Listed before, aside, behind,
Then couch'd him down beside the hind,
And quaked among the mountain fern,
To hear that sound so dull and stern.

† See Note to Stanza xxv.

INTRODUCTION TO CANTO THIRD.

TO WILLIAM ERSKINE, ESQ.
Ashestiel, Ettrick Forest.

LIKE April morning clouds, that pass,
With varying shadow, o'er the grass,
And imitate, on field and furrow,
Life's chequer'd scene of joy and sorrow;
Like streamlet of the mountain north,
Now in a torrent racing forth,
Now winding slow its silver train,
And almost slumbering on the plain;
Like breezes of the autumn day,
Whose voice inconstant dies away,
And ever swells again as fast,
When the ear deems its murmur past;
Thus various, my romantic theme
Flits, winds, or sinks, a morning dream.
Yet pleased, our eye pursues the trace
Of Light and Shade's inconstant race;
Pleased, views the rivulet afar,
Weaving its maze irregular;
And pleased, we listen as the breeze
Heaves its wild sigh through Autumn trees:
Then, wild as cloud, or stream, or gale,
Flow on, flow unconfined, my Tale!

Need I to thee, dear Erskine, tell
I love the license all too well,
In sounds now lowly, and now strong,
To raise the desultory song?—
Oft, when 'mid such capricious chime,
Some transient fit of lofty rhyme
To thy kind judgment seem'd excuse
For many an error of the muse,
Oft hast thou said, "If still mis-spent,
Thine hours to poetry are lent,
Go, and to tame thy wandering course,
Quaff from the fountain at the source;
Approach those masters, o'er whose tomb
Immortal laurels ever bloom:
Instructive of the feebler bard,
Still from the grave their voice is heard;
From them, and from the paths they show'd,
Choose honour'd guide and practised road;
Nor ramble on through brake and maze,
With harpers rude, of barbarous days.

"Or deem'st thou not our later time
Yields topic meet for classic rhyme?
Hast thou no elegiac verse
For Brunswick's venerable hearse?
What, not a line, a tear, a sigh,
When valour bleeds for liberty?—

Oh, hero of that glorious time,
When, with unrivall'd light sublime,—
Though martial Austria, and though all
The might of Russia, and the Gaul,
Though banded Europe stood her foes—
The star of Brandenburgh arose!
Thou couldst not live to see her beam
For ever quench'd in Jena's stream.
Lamented Chief!—it was not given
To thee to change the doom of Heaven,
And crush that dragon in its birth,
Predestined scourge of guilty earth.
Lamented chief!—not thine the power,
To save in that presumptuous hour,
When Prussia hurried to the field,
And snatch'd the spear, but left the shield!
Valour and skill 'twas thine to try,
And, tried in vain, 'twas thine to die.
Ill had it seem'd thy silver hair
The last, the bitterest pang to share,
For princedoms reft, and scutcheons riven,
And birthrights to usurpers given;
Thy land's, thy children's wrongs to feel,
And witness woes thou couldst not heal!
On thee relenting Heaven bestows
For honour'd life an honour'd close;
And when revolves, in time's sure change,
The hour of Germany's revenge,
When, breathing fury for her sake,
Some new Arminius shall awake,
Her champion, ere he strike, shall come,
To whet his sword on BRUNSWICK'S tomb.

"Or of the Red-Cross hero† teach,
Dauntless in dungeon as on breach:
Alike to him the sea, the shore,
The brand, the bridle, or the oar:
Alike to him the war that calls
Its votaries to the shatter'd walls, [blood,
Which the grim Turk, besmeared with
Against the Invincible made good;
Or that, whose thundering voice could wake
The silence of the polar lake,
When stubborn Russ, and metal'd Swede,
On the warp'd wave their death-game play'd;
Or that, where Vengeance and Affright
Howl'd round the father of the fight,
Who snatch'd, on Alexandria's sand,
The conqueror's wreath with dying hand.‡

"Or, if to touch such chord be thine,
Restore the ancient tragic line,
And emulate the notes that rung
From the wild harp, which silent hung
By silver Avon's holy shore,
Till twice an hundred years roll'd o'er;
When she, the bold Enchantress,§ came,
With fearless hand and heart on flame!
From the pale willow snatch'd the treasure,
And swept it with a kindred measure,
Till Avon's swans, while rung the grove
With Montfort's hate and Basil's love,
Awakening at the inspired strain,
Deem'd their own Shakspeare lived again."

Thy friendship thus thy judgment wronging,
With praises not to me belonging,
In task more meet for mightiest powers,
Wouldst thou engage my thriftless hours.
But say, my Erskine, hast thou weigh'd
That secret power by all obey'd,
Which warps not less the passive mind,
Its source conceal'd or undefined;
Whether an impulse, that has birth
Soon as the infant wakes on earth,
One with our feelings and our powers,
And rather part of us than ours;
Or whether fitlier term'd the sway
Of habit form'd in early day?
Howe'er derived, its force confest
Rules with despotic sway the breast,
And drags us on by viewless chain,
While taste and reason plead in vain.
Look east, and ask the Belgian why,
Beneath Batavia's sultry sky,
He seeks not eager to inhale
The freshness of the mountain gale,
Content to rear his whiten'd wall
Beside the dank and dull canal?
He'll say, from youth he loved to see
The white sail gliding by the tree.
Or see yon weatherbeaten hind,
Whose sluggish herds before him wind,
Whose tatter'd plaid and rugged cheek,
His northern clime and kindred speak;
Through England's laughing meads he goes,
And England's wealth around him flows;
Ask, if it would content him well,
At ease in those gay plains to dwell,
Where hedge-rows spread a verdant screen,
And spires and forests intervene,
And the neat cottage peeps between?
No! not for these would he exchange
His dark Lochaber's boundless range:
Not for fair Devon's meads forsake
Bennevis grey, and Garry's lake.

Thus, while I ape the measure wild
Of tales that charm'd me yet a child,
Rude though they be, still with the chime
Return the thoughts of early time;
And feelings, roused in life's first day,
Glow in the line, and prompt the lay.
Then rise those crags, that mountain tower,
Which charm'd my fancy's wakening hour.
Though no broad river swept along,
To claim, perchance, heroic song;

† Sir Sidney Smith.
‡ Sir Ralph Abercromby. § Joanna Baillie

Though sigh'd no groves in summer gale,
To prompt of love a softer tale;
Though scarce a puny streamlet's speed
Claim'd homage from a shepherd's reed;
Yet was poetic impulse given,
By the green hill and clear blue heaven.
It was a barren scene, and wild,
Where naked cliffs were rudely piled;
But ever and anon between
Lay velvet tufts of loveliest green;
And well the lonely infant knew
Recesses where the wall-flower grew,
And honeysuckle loved to crawl
Up the low crag and ruin'd wall.
I deem'd such nooks the sweetest shade
The sun in all its round survey'd;
And still I thought that shatter'd tower
The mightiest work of human power;
And marvell'd as the aged hind
With some strange tale bewitch'd my mind,
Of forayers, who, with headlong force,
Down from that strength had spurr'd their horse,
Their southern rapine to renew,
Far in the distant Cheviots blue,
And, home returning, fill'd the hall
With revel, wassel-rout, and brawl.
Methought that still, with trump and clang,
The gateway's broken arches rang;
Methought grim features, seam'd with scars,
Glared through the window's rusty bars,
And ever, by the winter hearth,
Old tales I heard of woe or mirth,
Of lovers' slights, of ladies' charms,
Of witches' spells, of warriors' arms;
Of patriot battles, won of old
By Wallace wight and Bruce the bold;
Of later fields of feud and fight,
When, pouring from their Highland height,
The Scottish clans, in headlong sway,
Had swept the scarlet ranks away.
While stretch'd at length upon the floor,
Again I fought each combat o'er,
Pebbles and shells, in order laid,
The mimic ranks of war display'd;
And onward still the Scottish Lion bore,
And still the scatter'd Southron fled before.

Still, with vain fondness, could I trace,
Anew, each kind familiar face,
That brighten'd at our evening fire! [Sire,
From the thatch'd mansion's grey-hair'd
Wise without learning, plain and good,
And sprung of Scotland's gentler blood;
Whose eye, in age, quick, clear, and keen,
Show'd what in youth its glance had been;
Whose doom discording neighbours sought,
Content with equity unbought; [Priest,
To him the venerable
Our frequent and familiar guest,
Whose life and manners well could paint
Alike the student and the saint;
Alas! whose speech too oft I broke
With gambol rude and timeless joke:
For I was wayward, bold, and wild,
A self-will'd imp, a grandame's child;
But half a plague, and half a jest,
Was still endured, beloved, caress'd.

For me, thus nurtured, dost thou ask
The classic poet's well-conn'd task?
Nay, Erskine, nay—On the wild hill
Let the wild heath-bell flourish still;
Cherish the tulip, prune the vine,
But freely let the woodbine twine,
And leave untrimm'd the eglantine:
Nay, my friend, nay—Since oft thy praise
Hath given fresh vigour to my lays;
Since oft thy judgment could refine
My flatten'd thought, or cumbrous line;
Still kind, as is thy wont, attend,
And in the minstrel spare the friend.
Though wild as cloud, as stream, as gale,
Flow forth, flow unrestrain'd, my Tale!

CANTO THIRD.

THE HOSTEL, OR INN.

I.

THE livelong day Lord Marmion rode:
The mountain path the Palmer show'd,
By glen and streamlet winded still,
Where stunted birches hid the rill.
They might not choose the lowland road,
For the Merse forayers were abroad,
Who, fired with hate and thirst of prey,
Had scarcely fail'd to bar their way.
Oft on the trampling band, from crown
Of some tall cliff, the deer look'd down;
On wing of jet, from his repose
In the deep heath, the black-cock rose;
Sprung from the gorse the timid roe,
Nor waited for the bending bow;
And when the stony path began,
By which the naked peak they wan,
Up flew the snowy ptarmigan.
The noon had long been pass'd before
They gain'd the height of Lammermoor:
Thence winding down the northern way,
Before them, at the close of day,
Old Gifford's towers and hamlet lay.

II.

No summons calls them to the tower,
To spend the hospitable hour.
To Scotland's camp the Lord was gone;
His cautious dame, in bower alone,
Dreaded her castle to unclose,
So late, to unknown friends or foes.

On through the hamlet as they paced,
Before a porch, whose front was graced
With bush and flagon trimly placed,
Lord Marmion drew his rein:
The village inn seem'd large, though rude;*
Its cheerful fire and hearty food
Might well relieve his train. [sprung,
Down from their seats the horsemen
With jingling spurs the court-yard rung;
They bind their horses to the stall,
For forage, food, and firing call,
And various clamour fills the hall:
Weighing the labour with the cost,
Toils everywhere the bustling host.

III.

Soon, by the chimney's merry blaze,
Through the rude hostel might you gaze;
Might see, where, in dark nook aloof,
The rafters of the sooty roof
Bore wealth of winter cheer;
Of sea-fowl dried, and solands store,
And gammons of the tusky boar,
And savoury haunch of deer.
The chimney arch projected wide;
Above, around it, and beside,
Were tools for housewives' hand;
Nor wanted, in that martial day,
The implements of Scottish fray,
The buckler, lance, and brand.
Beneath its shade, the place of state,
On oaken settle Marmion sate,
And view'd around the blazing hearth.
His followers mix in noisy mirth;
Whom with brown ale, in jolly tide,
From ancient vessels ranged aside,
Full actively their host supplied.

IV.

Theirs was the glee of martial breast,
And laughter theirs at little jest;
And oft Lord Marmion deign'd to aid,
And mingle in the mirth they made;
For though, with men of high degree,
The proudest of the proud was he,
Yet, train'd in camps, he knew the art
To win the soldier's hardy heart.
They love a captain to obey,
Boisterous as March, yet fresh as May;
With open hand, and brow as free,
Lover of wine and minstrelsy;
Ever the first to scale a tower,
As venturous in a lady's bower:—
Such buxom chief shall lead his host
From India's fires to Zembla's frost.

V.

Resting upon his pilgrim staff,
Right opposite the Palmer stood;
His thin dark visage seen but half,
Half hidden by his hood.
Still fix'd on Marmion was his look,
Which he, who ill such gaze could brook,
Strove by a frown to quell;
But not for that, though more than once
Full met their stern encountering glance,
The Palmer's visage fell.

VI.

By fits less frequent from the crowd
Was heard the burst of laughter loud;
For still, as squire and archer stared
On that dark face and matted beard,
Their glee and game declined.
All gazed at length in silence drear,
Unbroke, save when in comrade's ear
Some yeoman, wondering in his fear,
Thus whisper'd forth his mind:—
"Saint Mary! saw'st thou e'er such sight?
How pale his cheek, his eye how bright,
Whene'er the firebrand's fickle light
Glances beneath his cowl!
Full on our Lord he sets his eye;
For his best palfrey, would not I
Endure that sullen scowl."

VII.

But Marmion, as to chase the awe
Which thus had quell'd their hearts, who
The ever-varying fire-light show [saw
That figure stern and face of woe,
Now call'd upon a squire:—
"Fitz-Eustace, know'st thou not some lay,
To speed the lingering night away?
We slumber by the fire."—

VIII.

"So please you," thus the youth rejoin'd,
"Our choicest minstrel's left behind.
Ill may we hope to please your ear,
Accustom'd Constant's strains to hear.
The harp full deftly can he strike,
And wake the lover's lute alike;
To dear Saint Valentine, no thrush
Sings livelier from a spring-tide bush,
No nightingale her love-lorn tune
More sweetly warbles to the moon.
Woe to the cause, whate'er it be,
Detains from us his melody,
Lavish'd on rocks, and billows stern,
Or duller monks of Lindisfarne.
Now must I venture, as I may,
To sing his favourite roundelay."

IX.

A mellow voice Fitz-Eustace had,
The air he chose was wild and sad;
Such have I heard, in Scottish land,
Rise from the busy harvest band,
When falls before the mountaineer,
On Lowland plains, the ripen'd ear.
Now one shrill voice the notes prolong,
Now a wild chorus swells the song:
Oft have I listen'd, and stood still,
As it came soften'd up the hill,

And deem'd it the lament of men
Who languish'd for their native glen;
And thought how sad would be such sound
On Susquehana's swampy ground,
Kentucky's wood-encumber'd brake,
Or wild Ontario's boundless lake,
Where heart-sick exiles, in the strain,
Recall'd fair Scotland's hills again!

X.

SONG.

Where shall the lover rest,
Whom the fates sever
From his true maiden's breast,
Parted for ever?
Where, through groves deep and high,
Sounds the far billow,
Where early violets die,
Under the willow.

CHORUS.

Eleu loro, &c. Soft shall be his pillow.

There, through the summer day,
Cool streams are laving;
There, while the tempests sway,
Scarce are boughs waving;
There, thy rest shalt thou take,
Parted for ever,
Never again to wake,
Never, O never!

CHORUS.

Eleu loro, &c. Never, O never!

XI.

Where shall the traitor rest,
He, the deceiver,
Who could win maiden's breast,
Ruin, and leave her?
In the lost battle,
Borne down by the flying,
Where mingles war's rattle
With groans of the dying.

CHORUS.

Eleu loro, &c. There shall he be lying.

Her wing shall the eagle flap
O'er the false-hearted;
His warm blood the wolf shall lap,
Ere life be parted.
Shame and dishonour sit
By his grave ever,
Blessing shall hallow it,—
Never, O never!

CHORUS.

Eleu loro, &c. Never, O never!

XII.

It ceased, the melancholy sound;
And silence sunk on all around.
The air was sad; but sadder still
It fell on Marmion's ear,
And plain'd as if disgrace and ill,
And shameful death, were near.
He drew his mantle past his face,
Between it and the band,
And rested with his head a space,
Reclining on his hand.
His thoughts I scan not; but I ween,
That, could their import have been seen,
The meanest groom in all the hall,
That e'er tied courser to a stall,
Would scarce have wish'd to be their prey,
For Lutterward and Fontenaye.

XIII.

High minds, of native pride and force,
Most deeply feel thy pangs, Remorse!
Fear, for their scourge, mean villains have,
Thou art the torturer of the brave!
Yet fatal strength they boast to steel
Their minds to bear the wounds they feel,
Even while they writhe beneath the smart
Of civil conflict in the heart.
For soon Lord Marmion raised his head,
And, smiling, to Fitz-Eustace said—
"Is it not strange, that, as ye sung,
Seem'd in mine ear a death-peal rung,
Such as in nunneries they toll
For some departing sister's soul?
Say, what may this portend?"—
Then first the Palmer silence broke
(The livelong day he had not spoke),
"The death of a dear friend."*

XIV.

Marmion, whose steady heart and eye
Ne'er changed in worst extremity;
Marmion, whose soul could scantly brook,
Even from his King, a haughty look;
Whose accent of command controll'd,
In camps, the boldest of the bold;—
Thought, look, and utterance fail'd him now—
Fall'n was his glance, and flush'd his brow:
For either in the tone,
Or something in the Palmer's look,
So full upon his conscience strook,
That answer he found none.
Thus oft it haps, that when within
They shrink at sense of secret sin,
A feather daunts the brave;
A fool's wild speech confounds the wise,
And proudest princes veil their eyes
Before their meanest slave.

XV.

Well might he falter!—By his aid
Was Constance Beverley betray'd.
Not that he augur'd of the doom,
Which on the living closed the tomb:
But, tired to hear the desperate maid
Threaten by turns, beseech, upbraid;
And wroth, because in wild despair
She practised on the life of Clare;
Its fugitive the Church he gave,
Though not a victim, but a slave;

And deem'd restraint in convent strange
Would hide her wrongs, and her revenge.
Himself, proud Henry's favourite peer,
Held Romish thunders idle fear,
Secure his pardon he might hold,
For some slight mulct of penance-gold.
Thus judging, he gave secret way,
When the stern priests surprised their prey.
His train but deem'd the favourite page
Was left behind, to spare his age;
Or other if they deem'd, none dared
To mutter what he thought and heard:
Woe to the vassal, who durst pry
Into Lord Marmion's privacy!

XVI.

His conscience slept—he deemed her well,
And safe secured in distant cell;
But, waken'd by her favourite lay,
And that strange Palmer's boding say,
That fell so ominous and drear,
Full on the object of his fear,
To aid remorse's venom'd throes,
Dark tales of convent-vengeance rose;
And Constance, late betray'd and scorn'd,
All lovely on his soul return'd;
Lovely as when, at treacherous call,
She left her convent's peaceful wall,
Crimson'd with shame, with terror mute,
Dreading alike escape, pursuit,
Till love, victorious o'er alarms,
Hid fears and blushes in his arms.

XVII.

"Alas!" he thought, "how changed that mien!
How changed these timid looks have been,
Since years of guilt, and of disguise,
Have steel'd her brow, and arm'd her eyes!
No more of virgin terror speaks
The blood that mantles in her cheeks:
Fierce, and unfeminine, are there,
Frenzy for joy, for grief despair;
And I the cause—for whom were given
Her peace on earth, her hopes in heaven!—
Would," thought he, as the picture grows,
"I on its stalk had left the rose!
Oh, why should man's success remove
The very charms that wake his love!
Her convent's peaceful solitude
Is now a prison harsh and rude;
And, pent within the narrow cell,
How will her spirit chafe and swell!
How brook the stern monastic laws!
The penance how—and I the cause!—
Vigil and scourge—perchance even worse!"—
And twice he rose to cry, "To horse!"—
And twice his Sovereign's mandate came,
Like damp upon a kindling flame;
And twice he thought, "Gave I not charge
She should be safe, though not at large?
They durst not, for their island, shred
One golden ringlet from her head."

XVIII.

While thus in Marmion's bosom strove
Repentance and reviving love,
Like whirlwinds, whose contending sway
I've seen Loch Vennachar obey,
Their Host the Palmer's speech had heard,
And, talkative, took up the word:
"Ay, reverend Pilgrim, you, who stray
From Scotland's simple land away,
To visit realms afar,
Full often learn the art to know
Of future weal, or future woe,
By word, or sign, or star;
Yet might a knight his fortune hear,
If, knight-like, he despises fear,
Not far from hence;—if fathers old
Aright our hamlet legend told."—
These broken words the menials move
(For marvels still the vulgar love),
And, Marmion giving license cold,
His tale the Host thus gladly told:—

XIX.

THE HOST'S TALE.

"A Clerk could tell what years have flown
Since Alexander fill'd our throne
(Third monarch of that warlike name),
And eke the time when here he came
To seek Sir Hugo, then our lord:
A braver never drew a sword;
A wiser never, at the hour
Of midnight, spoke the word of power:
The same, whom ancient records call
The founder of the Goblin-Hall.*
I would, Sir Knight, your longer stay
Gave you that cavern to survey.
Of lofty roof, and ample size,
Beneath the castle deep it lies:
To hew the living rock profound,
The floor to pave, the arch to round,
There never toil'd a mortal arm—
It all was wrought by word and charm;
And I have heard my grandsire say,
That the wild clamour and affray
Of those dread artisans of hell,
Who labour'd under Hugo's spell,
Sounded as loud as ocean's war
Among the caverns of Dunbar.

XX.

"The King Lord Gifford's castle sought,
Deep labouring with uncertain thought;
Even then he muster'd all his host,
To meet upon the western coast:
For Norse and Danish galleys plied
Their oars within the frith of Clyde.
There floated Haco's banner trim,*
Above Norweyan warriors grim,
Savage of heart, and large of limb;

Threatening both continent and isle,
Bute, Arran, Cunninghame, and Kyle.
Lord Gifford, deep beneath the ground,
Heard Alexander's bugle sound,
And tarried not his garb to change,
But, in his wizard habit strange,
Came forth,—a quaint and fearful sight;
His mantle lined with fox-skins white;
His high and wrinkled forehead bore
A pointed cap, such as of yore
Clerks say that Pharaoh's Magi wore:
His shoes were mark'd with cross and [spell,
Upon his breast a pentacle;*
His zone, of virgin parchment thin,
Or, as some tell, of dead man's skin,
Bore many a planetary sign,
Combust, and retrograde, and trine;
And in his hand he held prepared,
A naked sword without a guard.

XXI.

"Dire dealings with the fiendish race
Had mark'd strange lines upon his face;
Vigil and fast had worn him grim;
His eyesight dazzled seem'd and dim,
As one unused to upper day;
Even his own menials with dismay
Beheld, Sir Knight, the grisly Sire,
In his unwonted wild attire;
Unwonted, for traditions run,
He seldom thus beheld the sun.—
'I know,' he said—(his voice was hoarse,
And broken seem'd its hollow force)—
'I know the cause, although untold,
Why the King seeks his vassal's hold:
Vainly from me my liege would know
His kingdom's future weal or woe;
But yet, if strong his arm and heart,
His courage may do more than art.

XXII.

"'Of middle air the demons proud,
Who ride upon the racking cloud,
Can read, in fix'd or wandering star,
The issue of events afar;
But still their sullen aid withhold,
Save when by mightier force controll'd.
Such late I summon'd to my hall;
And though so potent was the call,
That scarce the deepest nook of hell
I deem'd a refuge from the spell,
Yet, obstinate in silence still,
The haughty demon mocks my skill.
But thou,—who little know'st thy might,
As born upon that blessed night*
When yawning graves, and dying groan,
Proclaim'd hell's empire overthrown,—
With untaught valour shalt compel
Response denied to magic spell.'—
'Gramercy,' quoth our Monarch free,
'Place him but front to front with me,
And, by this good and honour'd brand,
The gift of Cœur-de-Lion's hand,
Soothly I swear, that, tide what tide,
The demon shall a buffet bide.'—
His bearing bold the wizard view'd,
And thus, well pleased, his speech re-
new'd:— [mark:
'There spoke the blood of Malcolm!—
Forth pacing hence, at midnight dark,
The rampart seek, whose circling crown
Crests the ascent of yonder down:
A southern entrance shalt thou find;
There halt, and there thy bugle wind,
And trust thine elfin foe to see,
In guise of thy worst enemy:
Couch then thy lance, and spur thy steed—
Upon him! and Saint George to speed!
If he go down, thou soon shalt know
Whate'er these airy sprites can show;—
If thy heart fail thee in the strife,
I am no warrant for thy life.'

XXIII.

"Soon as the midnight bell did ring,
Alone, and arm'd, forth rode the King
To that old camp's deserted round:
Sir Knight, you well might mark the mound,
Left hand the town,—the Pictish race,
The trench, long since, in blood did trace;
The moor around is brown and bare,
The space within is green and fair.
The spot our village children know,
For there the earliest wild-flowers grow;
But woe betide the wandering wight,
That treads its circle in the night!
The breadth across, a bowshot clear,
Gives ample space for full career:
Opposed to the four points of heaven,
By four deep gaps are entrance given.
The southernmost our Monarch past,
Halted, and blew a gallant blast;
And on the north, within the ring,
Appear'd the form of England's King,
Who then, a thousand leagues afar,
In Palestine waged holy war:
Yet arms like England's did he wield,
Alike the leopards in the shield,
Alike his Syrian courser's frame,
The rider's length of limb the same:
Long afterwards did Scotland know,
Fell Edward† was her deadliest foe.

XXIV.

"The vision made our Monarch start,
But soon he mann'd his noble heart,
And in the first career they ran,
The Elfin Knight fell, horse and man;
Yet did a splinter of his lance
Through Alexander's visor glance,

†Edward I. of England, surnamed Longshanks.

And razed the skin—a puny wound.
The King, light leaping to the ground,
With naked blade his phantom foe
Compell'd the future war to show.
Of Largs he saw the glorious plain,
Where still gigantic bones remain,
Memorial of the Danish war;
Himself he saw, amid the field,
On high his brandish'd war-axe wield,
And strike proud Haco from his car,
While all around the shadowy Kings
Denmark's grim ravens cower'd their wings.
'Tis said, that, in that awful night,
Remoter visions met his sight,
Foreshowing future conquests far,
When our sons' sons wage northern war;
A royal city, tower and spire,
Redden'd the midnight sky with fire,
And shouting crews her navy bore,
Triumphant to the victor shore.
Such signs may learned clerks explain,
They pass the wit of simple swain.

XXV.

"The joyful King turn'd home again,
Headed his host, and quell'd the Dane;
But yearly, when return'd the night
Of his strange combat with the sprite,
His wound must bleed and smart;
Lord Gifford then would gibing say,
'Bold as ye were, my liege, ye pay
The penance of your start.'
Long since, beneath Dunfermline's nave,
King Alexander fills his grave,
Our Lady give him rest!
Yet still the knightly spear and shield
The Elfin Warrior doth wield,
Upon the brown hill's breast;*
And many a knight hath proved his chance,
In the charm'd ring to break a lance,
But all have foully sped;
Save two, as legends tell, and they
Were Wallace wight, and Gilbert Hay.—
Gentles, my tale is said."

XXVI.

The quaighs† were deep, the liquor strong,
And on the tale the yeoman-throng
Had made a comment sage and long,
But Marmion gave a sign:
And, with their lord, the squires retire;
The rest, around the hostel fire,
Their drowsy limbs recline:
For pillow, underneath each head,
The quiver and the targe were laid.
Deep slumbering on the hostel floor,
Oppress'd with toil and ale, they snore:
The dying flame, in fitful change,
Threw on the group its shadows strange.

† *Quaigh*, a wooden cup composed of staves hooped together.

XXVII.

Apart, and nestling in the hay
Of a waste loft, Fitz-Eustace lay;
Scarce, by the pale moonlight, were seen
The foldings of his mantle green:
Lightly he dreamt, as youth will dream,
Of sport by thicket, or by stream.
Of hawk or hound, of ring or glove,
Or, lighter yet, of lady's love.
A cautious tread his slumber broke,
And, close beside him, when he woke,
In moonbeam half, and half in gloom,
Stood a tall form, with nodding plume;
But, ere his dagger Eustace drew,
His master Marmion's voice he knew.—

XXVIII.

"Fitz-Eustace! rise, I cannot rest;—
Yon churl's wild legend haunts my breast,
And graver thoughts have chafed my mood:
The air must cool my feverish blood;
And fain would I ride forth, to see
The scene of elfin chivalry.
Arise, and saddle me my steed;
And, gentle Eustace, take good heed
Thou dost not rouse these drowsy slaves;
I would not that the prating knaves
Had cause for saying, o'er their ale,
That I could credit such a tale."—
Then softly down the steps they slid;
Eustace the stable door undid,
And, darkling, Marmion's steed array'd,
While, whispering, thus the Baron said:—

XXIX.

"Did'st never, good my youth, hear tell,
That on the hour when I was born,
Saint George, who graced my sire's chapelle,
Down from his steed of marble fell,
A weary wight forlorn?
The flattering chaplains all agree,
The champion left his steed to me.
I would, the omen's truth to show,
That I could meet this Elfin Foe!
Blithe would I battle, for the right
To ask one question at the sprite:—
Vain thought! for elves, if elves there be,
An empty race, by fount or sea,
To dashing waters dance and sing,
Or round the green oak wheel their ring."
Thus speaking, he his steed bestrode,
And from the hostel slowly rode.

XXX.

Fitz-Eustace followed him abroad,
And mark'd him pace the village road,
And listen'd to his horse's tramp,
Till, by the lessening sound,
He judged that of the Pictish camp
Lord Marmion sought the round.

Wonder it seem'd, in the squire's eyes,
That one, so wary held, and wise,—
Of whom 'twas said, he scarce received
For gospel, what the Church believed,—
Should, stirr'd by idle tale,
Ride forth in silence of the night,
As hoping half to meet a sprite,
Array'd in plate and mail.
For little did Fitz-Eustace know,
That passions, in contending flow,
Unfix the strongest mind;
Wearied from doubt to doubt to flee,
We welcome fond credulity,
Guide confident, though blind.

XXXI.

Little for this Fitz-Eustace cared,
But, patient, waited till he heard,
At distance, prick'd to utmost speed,
The foot-tramp of a flying steed,
Come townward rushing on;
First, dead, as if on turf it trode,
Then, clattering on the village road,—
In other pace than forth he yode,†
Return'd Lord Marmion.
Down hastily he sprung from selle,
And, in his haste, wellnigh he fell;
To the squire's hand the rein he threw,
And spoke no word as he withdrew:
But yet the moonlight did betray,
The falcon-crest was soil'd with clay;
And plainly might Fitz-Eustace see,
By stains upon the charger's knee,
And his left side, that on the moor
He had not kept his footing sure.
Long musing on these wondrous signs,
At length to rest the squire reclines,
Broken and short; for still, between,
Would dreams of terror intervene:
Eustace did ne'er so blithely mark
The first notes of the morning lark.

INTRODUCTION TO CANTO FOURTH.

TO JAMES SKENE, ESQ.

Ashestiel, Ettrick Forest.

An ancient Minstrel sagely said,
"Where is the life which late we led?"
That motley clown in Arden wood,
Whom humorous Jaques with envy view'd,
Not even that clown could amplify,
On this trite text, so long as I.
Eleven years we now may tell,
Since we have known each other well;
Since, riding side by side, our hand
First drew the voluntary brand;
And sure, through many a varied scene,
Unkindness never came between.

† *Yode*, used by old poets for *went*.

Away these wingèd years have flown,
To join the mass of ages gone;
And though deep mark'd, like all below,
With chequer'd shades of joy and woe;
Though thou o'er realms and seas hast ranged,
Mark'd cities lost, and empires changed,
While here, at home, my narrower ken
Somewhat of manners saw, and men;
Though varying wishes, hopes, and fears
Fever'd the progress of these years,
Yet now, days, weeks, and months but seem
The recollection of a dream,
So still we glide down to the sea
Of fathomless eternity.

Even now it scarcely seems a day,
Since first I tuned this idle lay;
A task so often thrown aside,
When leisure graver cares denied,
That now, November's dreary gale,
Whose voice inspired my opening tale,
That same November gale once more
Whirls the dry leaves on Yarrow shore.
Their vex'd boughs streaming to the sky,
Once more our naked birches sigh,
And Blackhouse heights, and Ettrick Pen,
Have donn'd their wintry shrouds again:
And mountain dark, and flooded mead,
Bid us forsake the banks of Tweed.
Earlier than won't along the sky,
Mix'd with the rack, the snow mists fly;
The shepherd, who in summer sun,
Had something of our envy won,
As thou with pencil, I with pen,
The features traced of hill and glen;—
He who, outstretch'd the livelong day,
At ease among the heath-flowers lay,
View'd the light clouds with vacant look,
Or slumber'd o'er his tatter'd book,
Or idly busied him to guide
His angle o'er the lessen'd tide;—
At midnight now, the snowy plain
Finds sterner labour for the swain.

When red hath set the beamless sun,
Through heavy vapours dark and dun;
When the tired ploughman, dry and warm,
Hears, half asleep, the rising storm
Hurling the hail, and sleeted rain,
Against the casement's tinkling pane;
The sounds that drive wild deer, and fox,
To shelter in the brake and rocks,
Are warnings which the shepherd ask
To dismal and to dangerous task.
Oft he looks forth, and hopes, in vain,
The blast may sink in mellowing rain;
Till, dark above, and white below,
Decided drives the flaky snow,
And forth the hardy swain must go.

Long, with dejected look and whine,
To leave the hearth his dogs repine;
Whistling and cheering them to aid,
Around his back he wreathes the plaid:
His flock he gathers, and he guides,
To open downs, and mountain sides,
Where, fiercest though the tempest blow,
Least deeply lies the drift below.
The blast, that whistles o'er the fells,
Stiffens his locks to icicles;
Oft he looks back, while streaming far,
His cottage window seems a star,—
Loses its feeble gleam,—and then
Turns patient to the blast again,
And, facing to the tempest's sweep,
Drives through the gloom his lagging sheep.
If fails his heart, if his limbs fail,
Benumbing death is in the gale:
His paths, his landmarks, all unknown,
Close to the hut no more his own,
Close to the aid he sought in vain,
The morn may find the stiffen'd swain:*
The widow sees, at dawning pale,
His orphans raise their feeble wail;
And, close beside him, in the snow,
Poor Yarrow, partner of their woe,
Couches upon his master's breast,
And licks his cheek to break his rest.

Who envies now the shepherd's lot,
His healthy fare, his rural cot,
His summer couch by greenwood tree,
His rustic kirn's† loud revelry,
His native hill-notes, tuned on high,
To Marion of the blithesome eye;
His crook, his scrip, his oaten reed,
And all Arcadia's golden creed?

Changes not so with us, my Skene,
Of human life the varying scene?
Our youthful summer oft we see
Dance by on wings of game and glee,
While the dark storm reserves its rage,
Against the winter of our age:
As he, the ancient Chief of Troy,
His manhood spent in peace and joy;
But Grecian fires, and loud alarms,
Call'd ancient Priam forth to arms.
Then happy those, since each must drain
His share of pleasure, share of pain,—
Then happy those, beloved of Heaven,
To whom the mingled cup is given;
Whose lenient sorrows find relief,
Whose joys are chasten'd by their grief.
And such a lot, my Skene, was thine,
When thou of late were doom'd to twine,—
Just when thy bridal hour was by,—
The cypress with the myrtle tie.

† The Scottish harvest-home.

Just on thy bride her Sire had smiled,
And bless'd the union of his child,
When love must change its joyous cheer,
And wipe affection's filial tear.
Nor did the actions next his end,
Speak more the father than the friend:
Scarce had lamented Forbes* paid
The tribute to his Minstrel's shade;
The tale of friendship scarce was told,
Ere the narrator's heart was cold—
Far may we search before we find
A heart so manly and so kind!
But not around his honour'd urn,
Shall friends alone and kindred mourn;
The thousand eyes his care had dried,
Pour at his name a bitter tide;
And frequent falls the grateful dew,
For benefits the world ne'er knew.
If mortal charity dare claim
The Almighty's attributed name,
Inscribe above his mouldering clay,
"The widow's shield, the orphan's stay."
Nor, though it wake thy sorrow, deem
My verse intrudes on this sad theme;
For sacred was the pen that wrote,
"Thy father's friend forget thou not:"
And grateful title may I plead,
For many a kindly word and deed,
To bring my tribute to his grave:—
'Tis little—but 'tis all I have.

To thee, perchance, this rambling strain
Recalls our summer walks again;
When, doing nought,—and, to speak true,
Not anxious to find aught to do,—
The wild unbounded hills we ranged,
While oft our talk its topic changed,
And, desultory as our way,
Ranged, unconfined, from grave to gay.
Even when it flagg'd, as oft will chance,
No effort made to break its trance,
We could right pleasantly pursue
Our sports in social silence too;
Thou gravely labouring to pourtray
The blighted oak's fantastic spray;
I spelling o'er, with much delight,
The legend of that antique knight,
Tirante by name, yclep'd the White.
At either's feet a trusty squire,
Pandour and Camp,† with eyes of fire,
Jealous, each other's motions view'd,
And scarce suppress'd their ancient feud.
The laverock whistled from the cloud;
The stream was lively, but not loud;
From the white thorn the May-flower shed
Its dewy fragrance round our head:
Not Ariel lived more merrily
Under the blossom'd bough, than we.

† A favourite dog of the Poet's, a bull-terrier of extraordinary sagacity.

And blithesome nights, too, have been ours,
When Winter stript the summer's bowers.
Careless we heard, what now I hear,
The wild blast sighing deep and drear,
When fires were bright, and lamps beam'd gay,
And ladies tuned the lovely lay;
And he was held a laggard soul,
Who shunned to quaff the sparkling bowl.
Then he, whose absence we deplore,
Who breathes the gales of Devon's shore,
The longer miss'd, bewail'd the more;
And thou, and I, and dear loved Rae,
And one whose name I may not say,—
For not Mimosa's tender tree
Shrinks sooner from the touch than he,—
In merry chorus well combined,
With laughter drown'd the whistling wind.
Mirth was within; and Care without
Might gnaw her nails to hear our shout.
Not but amid the buxom scene
Some grave discourse might intervene—
Of the good horse that bore him best,
His shoulder, hoof, and arching crest:
For, like mad Tom's, our chiefest care,
Was horse to ride, and weapon wear.
Such nights we've had; and, though the game
Of manhood be more sober tame,
And though the field-day, or the drill,
Seem less important now—yet still
Such may we hope to share again.
The sprightly thought inspires my strain!
And mark how, like a horseman true,
Lord Marmion's march I thus renew.

CANTO FOURTH.

THE CAMP.

I.

EUSTACE, I said, did blithely mark
The first notes of the merry lark.
The lark sang shrill, the cock he crew,
And loudly Marmion's bugles blew,
And with their light and lively call,
Brought groom and yeoman to the stall.
Whistling they came, and free of heart,
But soon their mood was changed;
Complaint was heard on every part,
Of something disarranged.
Some clamour'd loud for armour lost;
Some brawl'd and wrangled with the host;
"By Becket's bones," cried one "I fear,
That some false Scot has stolen my spear!"—
Young Blount, Lord Marmion's second squire,
Found his steed wet with sweat and mire;
Although the rated horse-boy sware,
Last night he dress'd him sleek and fair.
While chafed the impatient squire like thunder,
Old Hubert shouts, in fear and wonder,—
"Help, gentle Blount! help, comrades all!
Bevis lies dying in his stall:
To Marmion who the plight dare tell,
Of the good steed he loves so well?"
Gaping for fear and ruth, they saw
The charger panting on his straw;
Till one, who would seem wisest, cried—
"What else but evil could betide,
With that cursed Palmer for our guide?
Better we had through mire and bush
Been lantern-led by Friar Rush."*

II.

Fitz-Eustace, who the cause but guess'd,
Nor wholly understood,
His comrades' clamorous plaints suppress'd;
He knew Lord Marmion's mood.
Him, ere he issued forth, he sought,
And found deep plunged in gloomy thought,
And did his tale display
Simply as if he knew of nought
To cause such disarray.
Lord Marmion gave attention cold,
Nor marvell'd at the wonders told,—
Pass'd them as accidents of course,
And bade his clarions sound to horse.

III.

Young Henry Blount, meanwhile, the cost
Had reckon'd with their Scottish host;
And, as the charge he cast and paid,
"Ill thou deserv'st thy hire," he said;
"Dost see, thou knave, my horse's plight?
Fairies have ridden him all the night,
And left him in a foam!
I trust that soon a conjuring band,
With English cross, and blazing brand,
Shall drive the devils from this land,
To their infernal home:
For in this haunted den, I trow,
All night they trample to and fro."—
The laughing host look'd on the hire,—
"Gramercy, gentle southern squire,
And if thou comest among the rest,
With Scottish broadsword to be blest,
Sharp be the brand, and sure the blow,
And short the pang to undergo."
Here stay'd their talk,—for Marmion
Gave now the signal to set on.
The Palmer showing forth the way,
They journey'd all the morning day.

IV.

The green-sward way was smooth and good,
Through Humbie's and through Saltoun's wood;
A forest glade, which, varying still,
Here gave a view of dale and hill,

There narrower closed, till over-head
A vaulted screen the branches made.
"A pleasant path," Fitz-Eustace said;
"Such as where errant-knights might see
Adventures of high chivalry;
Might meet some damsel flying fast,
With hair unbound, and looks aghast;
And smooth and level course were here,
In her defence to break a spear.
Here, too, are twilight nooks and dells;
And oft, in such, the story tells,
The damsel kind, from danger freed,
Did grateful pay her champion's meed."
He spoke to cheer Lord Marmion's mind:
Perchance to show his lore design'd;
For Eustace much had pored
Upon a huge romantic tome,
In the hall window of his home,
Imprinted at the antique dome
Of Caxton, or De Worde.
Therefore he spoke,—but spoke in vain,
For Marmion answer'd nought again.

V.

Now sudden, distant trumpets shrill,
In notes prolong'd by wood and hill,
Were heard to echo far;
Each ready archer grasp'd his bow,
But by the flourish soon they know,
They breathed no point of war.
Yet cautious, as in foeman's land,
Lord Marmion's order speeds the band,
Some opener ground to gain;
And scarce a furlong had they rode,
When thinner trees, receding, show'd
A little woodland plain.
Just in that advantageous glade,
The halting troop a line had made,
As forth from the opposing shade
Issued a gallant train.

VI.

First came the trumpets, at whose clang
So late the forest echoes rang;
On prancing steeds they forward press'd,
With scarlet mantle, azure vest;
Each at his trump a banner wore,
Which Scotland's royal scutcheon bore:
Heralds and pursuivants, by name
Bute, Islay, Marchmount, Rothsay, came,
In painted tabards, proudly showing
Gules, Argent, Or, and Azure glowing,
Attendant on a King-at-arms,
Whose hand the armorial truncheon held,
That feudal strife had often quell'd,
When wildest its alarms.

VII.

He was a man of middle age;
In aspect manly, grave, and sage,
As on King's errand come;
But in the glances of his eye,
A penetrating, keen, and sly
Expression found its home;
The flash of that satiric rage,
Which, bursting on the early stage,
Branded the vices of the age,
And broke the keys of Rome.
On milk-white palfrey forth he paced;
His cap of maintenance was graced
With the proud heron-plume.
From his steed's shoulder, loin, and breast,
Silk housings swept the ground,
With Scotland's arms, device, and crest,
Embroider'd round and round.
The double tressure might you see,
First by Achaius borne,
The thistle and the fleur-de-lis,
And gallant unicorn.
So bright the King's armorial coat,
That scarce the dazzled eye could note,
In living colours, blazon'd brave,
The Lion, which his title gave;
A train which well beseem'd his state,
But all unarm'd, around him wait.
Still is thy name in high account,
And still thy verse has charms,
Sir David Lindesay of the Mount,
Lord Lion King-at-arms!

VIII.

Down from his horse did Marmion spring,
Soon as he saw the Lion-King;
For well the stately Baron knew
To him such courtesy was due,
Whom royal James himself had crown'd,
And on his temples placed the round
Of Scotland's ancient diadem:
And wet his brow with hallow'd wine,
And on his finger given to shine
The emblematic gem.
Their mutual greetings duly made,
The Lion thus his message said:— [swore
"Though Scotland's King hath deeply
Ne'er to knit faith with Henry more,
And strictly hath forbid resort
From England to his royal court;
Yet, for he knows Lord Marmion's name,
And honours much his warlike fame,
My liege hath deem'd it shame, and lack
Of courtesy, to turn him back;
And, by his order, I, your guide,
Must lodging fit and fair provide,
Till finds King James meet time to see
The flower of English chivalry."

IX.

Though inly chafed at this delay,
Lord Marmion bears it as he may.
The Palmer, his mysterious guide,
Beholding thus his place supplied,
Sought to take leave in vain:

Strict was the Lion-King's command,
That none who rode in Marmion's band
Should sever from the train:
"England has here enow of spies
In Lady Heron's witching eyes:"
To Marchmount thus, apart, he said,
But fair pretext to Marmion made.
The right-hand path they now decline,
And trace against the stream the Tyne.

X.

At length up that wild dale they wind,
Where Crichtoun Castle* crowns the
For there the Lion's care assigned [bank;
A lodging meet for Marmion's rank.
That Castle rises on the steep
Of the green vale of Tyne:
And far beneath, where slow they creep,
From pool to eddy, dark and deep,
Where alders moist, and willows weep,
You hear her streams repine.
The towers in different ages rose;
Their various architecture shows
The builders' various hands;
A mighty mass, that could oppose,
When deadliest hatred fired its foes,
The vengeful Douglas bands.

XI.

Crichtoun! though now thy miry court
But pens the lazy steer and sheep,
Thy turrets rude, and totter'd Keep,
Have been the minstrel's loved resort.
Oft have I traced, within thy fort,
Of mouldering shields the mystic sense,
Scutcheons of honour, or pretence,
Quarter'd in old armorial sort,
Remains of rude magnificence.
Nor wholly yet had time defaced
Thy lordly gallery fair;
Nor yet the stony cord unbraced,
Whose twisted knots, with roses laced,
Adorn thy ruin'd stair.
Still rises unimpair'd below,
The court-yard's graceful portico;
Above its cornice, row and row
Of fair hewn facets richly show
Their pointed diamond form,
Though there but houseless cattle go,
To shield them from the storm.
And, shuddering, still may we explore,
Where oft whilom were captives pent,
The darkness of thy Massy More;†
Or, from thy grass-grown battlement,
May trace, in undulating line,
The sluggish mazes of the Tyne.

XII.

Another aspect Crichtoun show'd,
As through its portal Marmion rode;

But yet 'twas melancholy state
Received him at the outer gate;
For none were in the Castle then,
But women, boys, or aged men.
With eyes scarce dried, the sorrowing dame,
To welcome noble Marmion, came;
Her son, a stripling twelve years old,
Proffer'd the Baron's rein to hold;
For each man that could draw a sword
Had march'd that morning with their lord,
Earl Adam Hepburn,—he who died
On Flodden, by his sovereign's side.*
Long may his Lady look in vain!
She ne'er shall see his gallant train
Come sweeping back through Crichtoun-Dean.
'Twas a brave race, before the name
Of hated Bothwell stain'd their fame.

XIII.

And here two days did Marmion rest,
With every rite that honour claims,
Attended as the King's own guest;—
Such the command of Royal James,
Who marshall'd then his land's array,
Upon the Borough-moor that lay.
Perchance he would not foeman's eye
Upon his gathering host should pry,
Till full prepared was every band
To march against the English land.
Here while they dwelt, did Lindesay's wit
Oft cheer the Baron's moodier fit;
And, in his turn, he knew to prize [wise,—
Lord Marmion's powerful mind, and
Train'd in the lore of Rome and Greece,
And policies of war and peace.

XIV.

It chanced, as fell the second night,
That on the battlements they walk'd,
And, by the slowly fading light,
Of varying topics talk'd;
And, unaware, the Herald-bard
Said, Marmion might his toil have spared,
In travelling so far;
For that a messenger from heaven
In vain to James had counsel given
Against the English war;*
And, closer question'd, thus he told
A tale, which chronicles of old
In Scottish story have enroll'd:—

XV.

SIR DAVID LINDESAY'S TALE.

"Of all the palaces so fair,
Built for the royal dwelling,
In Scotland, far beyond compare,
Linlithgow is excelling;
And in its park, in jovial June,
How sweet the merry linnet's tune,
How blithe the blackbird's lay!

† The pit, or prison vault.—See Note to Stanza x.

The wild-duck bells* from ferny brake,
The coot dives merry on the lake;
The saddest heart might pleasure take
To see all nature gay.
But June is to our Sovereign dear,
The heaviest month in all the year:
Too well his cause of grief you know,
June saw his father's overthrow.*
Woe to the traitors, who could bring
The princely boy against his King!
Still in his conscience burns the sting.
In offices as strict as Lent,
King James's June is ever spent.

XVI.

"When last this ruthful month was come,
And in Linlithgow's holy dome
The King, as wont, was praying;
While, for his royal father's soul,
The chanters sung, the bells did toll,
The Bishop mass was saying—
For now the year brought round again
The day the luckless king was slain—
In Katharine's aisle the Monarch knelt,
With sackcloth-shirt and iron belt,
And eyes with sorrow streaming;
Around him, in their stalls of state,
The Thistle's Knight-Companions sate,
Their banners o'er them beaming.
I too was there, and, sooth to tell,
Bedeafen'd with the yangling knell,
Was watching where the sunbeams fell,
Through the stained casement gleaming;
But, while I mark'd what next befel,
It seem'd as I were dreaming.
Stepp'd from the crowd a ghostly wight,
In azure gown, with cincture white;
His forehead bald, his head was bare,
Down hung at length his yellow hair.—
Now, mock me not, when, good my Lord,
I pledge to you my knightly word,
That, when I saw his placid grace,
His simple majesty of face,
His solemn bearing, and his pace
So stately gliding on,
Seem'd to me ne'er did limner paint
So just an image of the Saint,
Who propp'd the Virgin in her faint,—
The loved Apostle John!

XVII.

"He stepp'd before the Monarch's chair,
And stood with rustic plainness there,
And little reverence made;
Nor head, nor body, bow'd nor bent,
But on the desk his arm he leant,
And words like these he said,
In a low voice—but never tone [bone:—
So thrill'd through vein, and nerve, and
'My mother sent me from afar,
Sir King, to warn thee not to war,—
Woe waits on thine array;
If war thou wilt, of woman fair,
Her witching wiles and wanton snare,
James Stuart, doubly warn'd, beware:
God keep thee as He may!' [seek
The wondering Monarch seem'd to
For answer, and found none;
And when he raised his head to speak,
The monitor was gone.
The Marshal and myself had cast
To stop him as he outward pass'd;
But, lighter than the whirlwind's blast,
He vanish'd from our eyes,
Like sunbeam on the billow cast,
That glances but, and dies."

XVIII.

While Lindesay told his marvel strange,
The twilight was so pale, [change,
He mark'd not Marmion's colour
While listening to the tale;
But, after a suspended pause,
The Baron spoke:—"Of Nature's laws
So strong I held the force,
That never superhuman cause
Could e'er control their course. [aim
And, three days since, had judged your
Was but to make your guest your game.
But I have seen, since past the Tweed,
What much has changed my sceptic creed,
And made me credit aught—" He staid,
And seem'd to wish his words unsaid:
But, by that strong emotion press'd,
Which prompts us to unload our breast,
Even when discovery's pain,
To Lindesay did at length unfold
The tale his village host had told,
At Gifford, to his train.
Nought of the Palmer says he there,
And nought of Constance, or of Clare;
The thoughts which broke his sleep, he
seems,
To mention but as feverish dreams.

XIX.

"In vain," said he, "to rest I spread
My burning limbs, and couch'd my head:
Fantastic thoughts return'd;
And, by their wild dominion led,
My heart within me burn'd.
So sore was the delirious goad,
I took my steed, and forth I rode,
And, as the moon shone bright and cold,
Soon reach'd the camp upon the wold.
The southern entrance I pass'd through,
And halted, and my bugle blew.
Methought an answer met my ear,—
Yet was the blast so low and drear,
So hollow, and so faintly blown,
It might be echo of my own.

XX.

"Thus judging, for a little space
I listen'd, ere I left the place;

But scarce could trust my eyes,
Nor yet can think they served me true,
When sudden in the ring I view,
In form distinct of shape and hue,
A mounted champion rise.—
I've fought, Lord-Lion, many a day,
In single fight, and mix'd affray,
And ever, I myself may say,
Have borne me as a knight;
But when this unexpected foe
Seem'd starting from the gulf below,—
I care not though the truth I show,—
I trembled with affright;
And as I placed in rest my spear,
My hand so shook for very fear,
I scarce could couch it right.

XXI.

"Why need my tongue the issue tell?
We ran our course,—my charger fell;—
What could he 'gainst the shock of hell?—
I roll'd upon the plain. [hand,
High o'er my head, with threatening
The spectre shook his naked brand,—
Yet did the worst remain:
My dazzled eyes I upward cast,—
Not opening hell itself could blast
Their sight, like what I saw!
Full on his face the moonbeam strook,—
A face could never be mistook!
I knew the stern vindictive look,
And held my breath for awe.
I saw the face of one who, fled
To foreign climes, has long been dead,—
I well believe the last;
For ne'er, from vizor raised, did stare
A human warrior, with a glare
So grimly and so ghast.
Thrice o'er my head he shook the blade;
But when to good Saint George I pray'd
(The first time e'er I ask'd his aid),
He plunged it in the sheath;
And, on his courser mounting light,
He seem'd to vanish from my sight:
The moonbeam dropp'd, and deepest
Sunk down upon the heath.— [night
'Twere long to tell what cause I have
To know his face, that met me there,
Call'd by his hatred from the grave,
To cumber upper air:
Dead or alive, good cause had he
To be my mortal enemy."

XXII.

Marvell'd Sir David of the Mount;
Then, learn'd in story, 'gan recount
Such chance had happ'd of old,
When once, near Norham, there did fight
A spectre fell of fiendish might,
In likeness of a Scottish knight,
With Brian Bulmer bold,
And train'd him nigh to disallow
The aid of his baptismal vow.
"And such a phantom, too, 'tis said,
With Highland broadsword, large, and [plaid,
And fingers red with gore,
Is seen in Rothiemurcus glade,
Or where the sable pine-trees shade
Dark Tomantoul and Auchnashiel,
Dromouchty, or Glenmore.†
And yet, whate'er such legend say,
Of warlike demon, ghost, or fay,
On mountain, moor, or plain,
Spotless in faith, in bosom bold,
True son of chivalry should hold
These midnight terrors vain;
For seldom have such spirits power
To harm, save in the evil hour,
When guilt we meditate within,
Or harbour unrepented sin."—
Lord Marmion turn'd him half aside,
And twice to clear his voice he tried,
Then press'd Sir David's hand,—
But nought, at length, in answer said;
And here their farther converse staid,
Each ordering that his band
Should bowne them with the rising day,
To Scotland's camp to take their way,—
Such was the King's command.

XXIII.

Early they took Dun-Edin's road,
And I could trace each step they trode:
Hill, brook, nor dell, nor rock, nor stone,
Lies on the path to me unknown.
Much might it boast of storied lore;
But, passing such digression o'er,
Suffice it that the route was laid
Across the furzy hills of Braid.
They pass'd the glen and scanty rill,
And climb'd the opposing bank, until
They gain'd the top of Blackford Hill.

XXIV.

Blackford! on whose uncultured breast,
Among the broom, and thorn, and
A truant boy, I sought the nest, [whin,
Or listed, as I lay at rest,
While rose, on breezes thin,
The murmur of the city crowd,
And, from his steeple jangling loud,
Saint Giles's mingling din.
Now, from the summit to the plain,
Waves all the hill with yellow grain;
And o'er the landscape as I look,
Nought do I see unchanged remain,
Save the rude cliffs and chiming brook.
To me they make a heavy moan,
Of early friendships past and gone.

† See the traditions concerning the spectre called *Lhamdearg*, or Bloody-hand, in a note on Canto III., Stanza xxv.

XXV.

But diffeent far the change has been,
Since Marmion, from the crown
Of Blackord, saw that martial scene
Upon the bent so brown:
Thousand pavilions, white as snow,
Spread all the Borough-moor below,*
Upland and dale, and down:—
A thousand, did I say? I ween,
Thousand on thousands there were seen,
That cheq'er'd all the heath between
The stramlet and the town;
In crossing ranks extending far,
Forming a camp irregular;
Oft giving way, where still there stood
Some relis of the old oak wood,
That darkly huge did intervene,
And tame the glaring white with green:
In these etended lines there lay
A martial kingdom's vast array.

XXVI.

For from Hebudes, dark with rain,
To eastern Lodon's fertile plain,
And from the southern Redswire edge,
To farthest Rosse's rocky ledge;
From wes to east, from south to north,
Scotland ent all her warriors forth.
Marmion might hear the mingled hum
Of myriads up the mountain come;
The horses' tramp, and tingling clank,
Where chiefs review'd their vassal rank,
And clarger's shrilling neigh;
And seethe shifting lines advance,
While frequent flash'd, from shield and lance,
The sun's reflected ray.

XXVII.

Thin curling in the morning air,
The wreaths of failing smoke declare
To embers now the brands decay'd,
Where the night-watch their fires had made.
They saw, slow rolling on the plain,
Full many a baggage-cart and wain,
And fire artillery's clumsy car,
By sluggish oxen tugg'd to war;
And here were Borthwick's Sisters Seven,†
And culverins which France had given.
Ill-omen'd gift! the guns remain
The conqueror's spoil on Flodden plain.

XXVIII.

Normark'd they less, where in the air
A thousand streamers flaunted fair;
Various in shape, device, and hue,
Green, sanguine, purple, red, and blue,
Broad, narrow, swallow-tail'd, and square,
Scroll, pennon, pensil, bandrol,‡ there
O'er the pavilions flew.

† Seven culverins so called, cast by one Borthwick.

‡ Each of these feudal ensigns intimated the different rank of those entitled to display them.

Highest and midmost, was descried
The royal banner floating wide; [straight,
The staff, a pine-tree, strong and
Pitch'd deeply in a massive stone,
Which still in memory is shown,
Yet bent beneath the standard's weight
Whene'er the western wind unroll'd,
With toil, the huge and cumbrous
And gave to view the dazzling field, [fold,
Where, in proud Scotland's royal shield,
The ruddy lion ramp'd in gold.*

XXIX.

Lord Marmion view'd the landscape bright,—
He view'd it with a chief's delight,—
Until within him burn'd his heart,
And lightning from his eye did part,
As on the battle-day;
Such glance did falcon never dart,
When stooping on his prey.
"Oh! well, Lord-Lion, hast thou said,
Thy King from warfare to dissuade
Were but a vain essay:
For, by Saint George, were that host mine,
Not power infernal nor divine,
Should once to peace my soul incline,
Till I had dimm'd their armour's shine
In glorious battle-fray!"
Answer'd the Bard, of milder mood:
"Fair is the sight,—and yet 'twere good,
That kings would think withal,
When peace and wealth their land has [bless'd,
'Tis better to sit still at rest,
Than rise, perchance to fall."

XXX.

Still on the spot Lord Marmion stay'd,
For fairer scene he ne'er survey'd.
When sated with the martial show
That peopled all the plain below,
The wandering eye could o'er it go,
And mark the distant city glow
With gloomy splendour red; [slow,
For on the smoke-wreaths, huge and
That round her sable turrets flow,
The morning beams were shed,
And tinged them with a lustre proud,
Like that which streaks a thunder-cloud.
Such dusky grandeur clothed the height,
Where the huge Castle holds its state,
And all the steep slope down,
Whose ridgy back heaves to the sky,
Piled deep and massy, close and high,
Mine own romantic town!
But northward far, with purer blaze,
On Ochil mountains fell the rays,
And as each heathy top they kiss'd,
It gleam'd a purple amethyst.
Yonder the shores of Fife you saw;
Here Preston-Bay and Berwick-Law:
And, broad between them roll'd,

The gallant Frith the eye might note,
Whose islands on its bosom float,
Like emeralds chased in gold.
Fitz-Eustace' heart felt closely pent;
As if to give his rapture vent,
The spur he to his charger lent,
And raised his bridle hand,
And, making demi-volte in air,
Cried, "Where's the coward that would
To fight for such a land?" [not dare
The Lindesay smiled his joy to see;
Nor Marmion's frown repress'd his glee.

XXXI.

Thus while they look'd, a flourish proud,
Where mingled trump, and clarion loud,
And fife, and kettle-drum,
And sackbut deep, and psaltery,
And war-pipe with discordant cry,
And cymbal clattering to the sky,
Making wild music bold and high,
Did up the mountain come;
The whilst the bells, with distant chime,
Merrily told the hour of prime,
And thus the Lindesay spoke:
"Thus clamour still the war-notes when
The King to mass his way has ta'en,
Or to St. Katharine's of Sienne,
Or Chapel of Saint Rocque.
To you they speak of martial fame:
But me remind of peaceful game,
When blither was their cheer,
Thrilling in Falkland-woods the air,
In signal none his steed should spare,
But strive which foremost might repair
To the downfall of the deer.

XXXII.

"Nor less," he said,—"when looking
I view yon Empress of the North [forth,
Sit on her hilly throne;
Her palace's imperial bowers,
Her castle, proof to hostile powers,
Her stately halls and holy towers—
Nor less," he said, "I moan,
To think what woe mischance may bring,
And how these merry bells may ring
The death-dirge of our gallant King;
Or with the larum call
The burghers forth to watch and ward,
'Gainst southern sack and fires to guard
Dun-Edin's leaguer'd wall.—
But not for my presaging thought,
Dream conquest sure, or cheaply bought!
Lord Marmion, I say nay:
God is the guider of the field,
He breaks the champion's spear and
But thou thyself shalt say, shield,—
When joins yon host in deadly stowre.
That England's dames must weep in bower,
Her monks the death-mass sing;
For never saw'st thou such a lower
Led on by such a King."—
And now, down winding to the plain,
The barriers of the camp the gain,
And there they made a stay.—
There stays the Minstrel, till he fling
His hand o'er every Border string,
And fit his harp, the pomp to sing
Of Scotland's ancient Court and King,
In the succeeding lay.

INTRODUCTION TO CANTO FIFTH.

TO GEORGE ELLIS, ESQ.

Edinburgh.

WHEN dark December glooms the day,
And takes our autumn joys away;
When short and scant the sunbeam throws,
Upon the weary waste of snows,
A cold and profitless regard,
Like patron on a needy bard
When sylvan occupation's done,
And o'er the chimney rests the gun,
And hang, in idle trophy, near,
The game-pouch, fishing-rod, and spear;
When wiry terrier, rough and grim,
And greyhound, with his length of limb,
And pointer, now employ'd no more,
Cumber our parlour's narrow floor;
When in his stall the impatient steed
Is long condemn'd to rest and feed;
When from our snow-encircled home,
Scarce cares the hardiest step to roam,
Since path is none, save that to bring
The needful water from the spring;
When wrinkled news-page, thrice conn'd o'er,
Beguiles the dreary hour no more [o'er,
And darkling politician, cross'd,
Inveighs against the lingering post,
And answering housewife sore complains
Of carriers' snow-impeded wains;—
When such the country cheer, I come,
Well pleased, to seek our city home;
For converse, and for books, to change
The Forest's melancholy range,
And welcome, with renew'd delight
The busy day and social night.

Not here need my desponding rhyme
Lament the ravages of time,
As erst by Newark's riven towers,
And Ettrick stripp'd of forest bowers.
True,—Caledonia's Queen is changed,*
Since on her dusky summit ranged,
Within its steepy limits pent,
By bulwark, line, and battlement,
And flanking towers, and laky flood,
Guarded and garrison'd she stood,

Denying entrance or resort,
Save at each tall embattled port;
Above whose arch, suspended, hung
Portcullis spiked with iron prong.
That long is gone,—but not so long
Since, early closed, and opening late,
Jealous revolved the studded gate,
Whose task, from eve to morning tide,
A wicket churlishly supplied.
Stern then, and steel-girt was thy brow,
Dun-Edin! O, how alter'd now,
When safe amid thy mountain court
Thou sit'st, like Empress at her sport,
And liberal, unconfined, and free,
Flinging thy white arms to the sea,
For thy dark cloud, with umber'd lower,
That hung o'er cliff, and lake, and tower,
Thou gleam'st against the western ray
Ten thousand lines of brighter day.

Not she, the Championess of old,
In Spenser's magic tale enroll'd,—
She, for the charmed spear renown'd,
Which forced each knight to kiss the ground,—
Not she morechanged when, placed at rest,
What time she was Malbecco's guest,†
She gave to flow her maiden vest;
When from the corslet's grasp relieved,
Free to the sight her bosom heaved;
Sweet was her blue eye's modest smile,
Erst hidden by the aventayle;
And down her shoulders graceful roll'd
Her locks profuse, of paly gold.
They who whilom, in midnight fight,
Had marvell'd at her matchless might,
No less her maiden charms approved,
But looking liked, and liking loved.
The sight could jealous pangs beguile,
And charm Malbecco's cares a while;
And he, the wandering Squire of Dames,
Forgot his Columbella's claims,
And passion, erst unknown, could gain
The breast of blunt Sir Satyrane;
Nor durst light Paridel advance,
Bold as he was, a looser glance,
She charm'd, at once, and tamed the heart,
Incomparable Britomarte!

So thou, fair City! disarray'd
Of battled wall, and rampart's aid,
As stately seem'st, but lovelier far
Than in that panoply of war.
Nor deem that from thy fenceless throne
Strength and security are flown;
Still, as of yore, Queen of the North!
Still canst thou send thy children forth.
Ne'er readier at alarm-bell's call
Thy burghers rose to man thy wall,
Than now, in danger, shall be thine,
Thy dauntless voluntary line;
For fosse and turret proud to stand,
Their breasts the bulwarks of the land.
Thy thousands, train'd to martial toil,
Full red would stain their native soil,
Ere from thy mural crown there fell
The slightest knosp, or pinnacle.
And if it come,—as come it may,
Dun-Edin! that eventful day,—
Renown'd for hospitable deed,
That virtue much with Heaven may plead,
In patriarchal times whose care
Descending angels deign'd to share;
That claim may wrestle blessings down
On those who fight for The Good Town,
Destined in every age to be
Refuge of injured royalty;
Since first, when conquering York arose,
To Henry meek she gave repose,
Till late, with wonder, grief, and awe,
Great Bourbon's relics, sad she saw.

Truce to these thoughts!—for, as they rise,
How gladly I avert mine eyes,
Bodings, or true or false, to change,
For Fiction's fair romantic range,
Or for tradition's dubious light,
That hovers 'twixt the day and night:
Dazzling alternately and dim,
Her wavering lamp I'd rather trim,
Knights, squires, and lovely dames to see,
Creation of my fantasy,
Than gaze abroad on reeky fen,
And make of mists invading men.
Who loves not more the knight of June
Than dull December's gloomy noon?
The moonlight than the fog of frost?
And can we say, which cheats the most?

But who shall teach my harp to gain
A sound of the romantic strain,
Whose Anglo-Norman tones whilere
Could win the royal Henry's ear,
Famed Beauclerc call'd, for that he loved
The minstrel, and his lay approved?
Who shall these lingering notes redeem,
Decaying on Oblivion's stream;
Such notes as from the Breton tongue
Marie translated, Blondel sung?—
O! born, Time's ravage to repair,
And make the dying muse thy care;
Who, when his scythe her hoary foe
Was poising for the final blow,
The weapon from his hand could wring
And break his glass, and shear his wing
And bid, reviving in his strain,
The gentle poet live again;
Thou, who canst give to lightest
An unpedantic moral gay,

† See "The Fairy Queen," Book III., Canto ix.

Nor less the dullest theme bid flit
On wings of unexpected wit;
In letters as in life approved,
Example honour'd, and beloved,—
Dear ELLIS! to the bard impart
A lesson of thy magic art,
To win at once the head and heart,—
At once to charm, instruct, and mend,
My guide, my pattern, and my friend!

Such minstrel lesson to bestow
Be long thy pleasing task,—but, O!
No more by thy example teach,—
What few can practise, all can preach,—
With even patience to endure
Lingering disease, and painful cure,
And boast affliction's pangs subdued
By mild and manly fortitude.
Enough, the lesson has been given:
Forbid the repetition, Heaven!

Come listen, then! for thou hast known
And loved the minstrel's varying tone,
Who, like his Border sires of old,
Waked a wild measure rude and bold,
Till Windsor's oaks, and Ascot plain,
With wonder heard the northern strain.
Come listen! bold in thy applause,
The bard shall scorn pedantic laws;
And, as the ancient art could stain
Achievements on the storied pane,
Irregularly traced and plann'd,
But yet so glowing and so grand,—
So shall he strive, in changeful hue,
Field, feast, and combat to renew,
And loves, and arms, and harpers' glee,
And all the pomp of chivalry.

CANTO FIFTH.

THE COURT.

I.

THE train has left the hills of Braid;
The barrier guard have open made
(So Lindesay bade) the palisade,
That closed the tented ground;
Their men the warders backward drew,
And carried pikes as they rode through,
Into its ample bound.
Fast ran the Scottish warriors there,
Upon the Southern band to stare.
And envy with their wonder rose,
To see such well-appointed foes;
Such length of shafts, such mighty bows,
So huge, that many simply thought,
But for a vaunt such weapons wrought;
And little deem'd their force to feel,
Through links of mail, and plates of steel,
When rattling upon Flodden vale,
The cloth-yard arrows flew like hail.*

II.

Nor less did Marmion's skilful view
Glance every line and squadron through;
And much he marvell'd one small land
Could marshal forth such various band:
For men-at-arms were here,
Heavily sheathed in mail and plate,
Like iron towers for strength and weight,
On Flemish steeds of bone and height,
With battle-axe and spear.
Young knights and squires, a lighter train,
Practised their chargers on the plain,
By aid of leg, of hand, and rein,
Each warlike feat to show,
To pass, to wheel, the croupe to gain,
And high curvett, that not in vain
The sword-sway might descend amain
On foeman's casque below.
He saw the hardy burghers there
March arm'd, on foot, with faces bare,*
For vizor they wore none,
Nor waving plume, nor crest of knight;
But burnished were their corslets bright,
Their brigantines, and gorgets light,
Like very silver shone.
Long pikes they had for standing fight,
Two-handed swords they wore,
And many wielded mace of weight,
And bucklers bright they bore.

III.

On foot the yeoman too, but dress'd
In his steel-jack, a swarthy vest,
With iron quilted well;
Each at his back (a slender store)
His forty days' provision bore,
As feudal statutes tell.
His arms were halbert, axe, or spear,*
A crossbow there, a hagbut here,
A dagger-knife, and brand.
Sober he seem'd, and sad of cheer,
As loth to leave his cottage dear,
And march to foreign strand;
Or musing, who would guide his steer,
To till the fallow land.
Yet deem not in his thoughtful eye
Did aught of dastard terror lie;
More dreadful far his ire,
Than theirs, who, scorning danger's name,
In eager mood to battle came,
Their valour like light straw on flame,
A fierce but fading fire.

IV.

Not so the Borderer:—bred to war,
He knew the battle's din afar,
And joy'd to hear it swell.
His peaceful day was slothful ease;
Nor harp, nor pipe, his ear could please
Like the loud slogan yell.
On active steed, with lance and blade,
The light-arm'd pricker plied his trade,—

Let nobles fight for fame;
Let vassals follow where they lead,
Burghers to guard their townships bleed,
But war's the Borderers' game.
Their gain, their glory, their delight,
To sleep the day, maraud the night,
O'er mountain, moss, and moor;
Joyful to fight they took their way,
Scarce caring who might win the day,
Their booty was secure.
These, as Lord Marmion's train pass'd by,
Look'd on at first with careless eye,
Nor marvell'd aught, well taught to know
The form and force of English bow.
But when they saw the Lord array'd
In splendid arms and rich brocade,
Each Borderer to his kinsman said,—
"Hist, Ringan! seest thou there!
Canst guess which road they'll homeward
O! could we but on Border side, [ride?—
By Eusedale glen, or Liddell's tide,
Beset a prize so fair!
That fangless Lion, too, their guide,
Might chance to lose his glistering hide;
Brown Maudlin, of that doublet pied,
Could make a kirtle rare."

V.

Next, Marmion mark'd the Celtic race,
Of different language, form, and face,
A various race of man;
Just then the Chiefs their tribes array'd,
And wild and garish semblance made,
The chequer'd trews, and belted plaid,
And varying notes the war-pipes bray'd,
To every varying clan;
Wild through their red or sable hair
Look'd out their eyes with savage stare,
On Marmion as he pass'd;
Their legs above the knee were bare;
Their frame was sinewy, short, and spare,
And harden'd to the blast;
Of taller race, the chiefs they own
Were by the eagle's plumage known.
The hunted red-deer's undress'd hide
Their hairy buskins well supplied;
The graceful bonnet deck'd their head:
Back from their shoulders hung the plaid;
A broadsword of unwieldy length,
A dagger proved for edge and strength,
A studded targe they wore,
And quivers, bows, and shafts,—but, O!
Short was the shaft, and weak the bow,
To that which England bore.
The Isles-men carried at their backs
The ancient Danish battle-axe.
They raised a wild and wondering cry,
As with his guide rode Marmion by.
Loud were their clamouring tongues, as when
The clanging sea-fowl leave the fen,
And, with their cries discordant mix'd,
Grumbled and yell'd the pipes betwixt.

VI.

Thus through the Scottish camp they
And reach'd the City gate at last, [pass'd,
Where all around, a wakeful guard,
Arm'd burghers kept their watch and ward.
Well had they cause of jealous fear,
When lay encamp'd, in field so near,
The Borderer and the Mountaineer.
As through the bustling streets they go,
All was alive with martial show:
At every turn, with dinning clang,
The armourer's anvil clash'd and rang;
Or toil'd the swarthy smith, to wheel
The bar that arms the charger's heel;
Or axe, or falchion, to the side
Of jarring grindstone was applied. [pace,
Page, groom, and squire, with hurrying
Through street, and lane, and market-
Bore lance, or casque, or sword; [place,
While burghers, with important face,
Described each new-come lord,
Discuss'd his lineage, told his name,
His following, and his warlike fame.
The Lion led to lodging meet,
Which high o'erlook'd the crowded street;
There must the Baron rest,
Till past the hour of vesper tide,
And then to Holy-Rood must ride,—
Such was the King's behest.
Meanwhile the Lion's care assigns
A banquet rich, and costly wines,
To Marmion and his train;*
And when the appointed hour succeeds,
The Baron dons his peaceful weeds,
And following Lindesay as he leads,
The palace-halls they gain.

VII.

Old Holy-Rood rung merrily,
That night, with wassell, mirth, and glee;
King James within her princely bower,
Feasted the Chiefs of Scotland's power,
Summon'd to spend the parting hour;
For he had charged that his array
Should southward march by break of day.
Well loved that splendid Monarch aye
The banquet and the song,
By day the tourney, and by night
The merry dance, traced fast and light,
The maskers quaint, the pageant bright,
The revel loud and long.
This feast outshone his banquets past,
It was his blithest—and his last.
The dazzling lamps, from gallery gay,
Cast on the Court a dancing ray;
Here to the harp did minstrels sing;
There ladies touched a softer string;
With long-ear'd cap, and motley vest,
The licensed fool retail'd his jest;

His magic tricks the juggler plied;
At dice and draughts the gallants vied;
While some, in close recess apart,
Courted the ladies of their heart,
Nor courted them in vain;
For often, in the parting hour,
Victorious Love asserts his power
O'er coldness and disdain;
And flinty is her heart, can view
To battle march a lover true—
Can hear, perchance, his last adieu,
Nor own her share of pain.

VIII.

Through this mix'd crowd of glee and game,
The King to greet Lord Marmion came,
While, reverent, all made room.
An easy task it was, I trow,
King James's manly form to know;
Although, his courtesy to show,
He doff'd, to Marmion bending low,
His broider'd cap and plume.
For royal was his garb and mien,
His cloak, of crimson velvet piled,
Trimm'd with the fur of marten wild;
His vest of changeful satin sheen,
The dazzled eye beguiled;
His gorgeous collar hung adown, [crown,
Wrought with the badge of Scotland's
The thistle brave, of old renown:
His trusty blade, Toledo right,
Descended from a baldric bright;
White were his buskins; on the heel
His spurs inlaid of gold and steel;
His bonnet, all of crimson fair,
Was button'd with a ruby rare:
And Marmion deem'd he ne'er had seen
A prince of such a noble mien.

IX.

The Monarch's form was middle size;
For feat of strength, or exercise,
Shaped in proportion fair;
And hazel was his eagle eye,
And auburn of the darkest dye,
His short curl'd beard and hair.
Light was his footstep in the dance,
And firm his stirrup in the lists;
And, oh! he had that merry glance,
That seldom lady's heart resists.
Lightly from fair to fair he flew,
And loved to plead, lament, and sue;—
Suit lightly won, and short-lived pain,
For monarchs seldom sigh in vain.
I said he joy'd in banquet bower;
But, 'mid his mirth, 'twas often strange,
How suddenly his cheer would change,
His look o'ercast and lower,
If, in a sudden turn, he felt
The pressure of his iron belt,
That bound his breast in penance pain,
In memory of his father slain.*

Even so 'twas strange how, evermore,
Soon as the passing pang was o'er,
Forward he rush'd, with double glee,
Into the stream of revelry:
Thus, dim-seen object of affright
Startles the courser in his flight,
And half he halts, half springs aside;
But feels the quickening spur applied,
And, straining on the tighten'd rein,
Scours doubly swift o'er hill and plain.

X.

O'er James's heart, the courtiers say,
Sir Hugh the Heron's wife held sway:*
To Scotland's Court she came,
To be a hostage for her lord,
Who Cessford's gallant heart had gored,
And with the King to make accord,
Had sent his lovely dame.
Nor to that lady free alone
Did the gay King allegiance own;
For the fair Queen of France
Sent him a turquois ring and glove,
And charged him, as her knight and love,
For her to break a lance; [brand,*
And strike three strokes with Scottish
And march three miles on Southron land,
And bid the banners of his band
In English breezes dance.
And thus, for France's Queen he drest
His manly limbs in mailèd vest;
And thus admitted English fair
His inmost counsels still to share;
And thus, for both, he madly plann'd
The ruin of himself and land!
And yet, the sooth to tell,
Nor England's fair, nor France's Queen,
Were worth one pearl-drop, bright and sheen,
From Margaret's eyes that fell,—
His own Queen Margaret, who, in Lithgow's bower,
All lonely sat, and wept the weary hour.

XI.

The Queen sits lone in Lithgow pile,
And weeps the weary day,
The war against her native soil,
Her Monarch's risk in battle broil:—
And in gay Holy-Rood, the while,
Dame Heron rises with a smile
Upon the harp to play.
Fair was her rounded arm, as o'er
The strings her fingers flew;
And as she touch'd and tuned them all,
Ever her bosom's rise and fall
Was plainer given to view;
For, all for heat, was laid aside
Her wimple, and her hood untied.
And first she pitch'd her voice to sing,
Then glanced her dark eye on the King,
And then around the silent ring;

And laugh'd, and blush'd, and oft did say
Her pretty oath, by Yea and Nay,
She could not, would not, durst not play!
At length, upon the harp, with glee,
Mingled with arch simplicity,
A soft, yet lively air she rung,
While thus the wily lady sung:—

XII.

LOCHINVAR.

LADY HERON'S SONG.

O, young Lochinvar is come out of the west, [the best;
Through all the wide Border his steed was
And save his good broadsword, he weapons had none,
He rode all unarm'd, and he rode all alone.
So faithful in love, and so dauntless in war,
There never was knight like the young Lochinvar.

He staid not for brake, and he stopp'd not for stone, [was none;
He swam the Eske river where ford there
But ere he alighted at Netherby gate,
The bride had consented, the gallant came late;
For a laggard in love, and a dastard in war,
Was to wed the fair Ellen of brave Lochinvar.

So boldly he enter'd the Netherby Hall,
Among bride's-men, and kinsmen, and brothers, and all: [his sword
Then spoke the bride's father, his hand on
(For the poor craven bridegroom said never a word), [war,
"O come ye in peace here, or come ye in
Or to dance at our bridal, young Lord Lochinvar?"—

"I long woo'd your daughter, my suit you denied;— [its tide—
Love swells like the Solway, but ebbs like
And now am I come, with this lost love of mine, [of wine.
To lead but one measure, drink one cup
There are maidens in Scotland more lovely by far, [Lochinvar."
That would gladly be bride to the young

The bride kiss'd the goblet: the knight took it up, [down the cup.
He quaff'd off the wine, and he threw
She look'd down to blush, and she look'd up to sigh, [eye.
With a smile on her lips, and a tear in her
He took her soft hand, ere her mother could bar,— [Lochinvar.
"Now tread we a measure!" said young

So stately his form, and so lovely her face,
That never a hall such a galliard did grace;
While her mother did fret, and her father did fume, [bonnet and plume;
And the bridegroom stood dangling his
And the bride-maidens whispered, "'Twere better by far, [young Lochinvar."
To have match'd our fair cousin with

One touch to her hand, and one word in her ear, [charger stood near;
When they reach'd the hall door, and the
So light to the croupe the fair lady he swung,
So light to the saddle before her he sprung!
"She is won! we are gone, over bank, bush, and scaur;
They'll have fleet steeds that follow," quoth young Lochinvar.

There was mounting 'mong Græmes of the Netherby clan;
Forsters, Fenwicks, and Musgraves, they rode and they ran; [Lee,
There was racing and chasing, on Cannobie
But the lost bride of Netherby ne'er did they see.
So daring in love, and so dauntless in war,
Have ye e'er heard of gallant like young Lochinvar?

XIII.

The Monarch o'er the siren hung
And beat the measure as she sung;
And, pressing closer, and more near,
He whisper'd praises in her ear.
In loud applause the courtiers vied;
And ladies wink'd, and spoke aside.
The witching dame to Marmion threw
A glance, where seem'd to reign
The pride that claims applauses due,
And of her royal conquest too,
A real or feign'd disdain:
Familiar was the look, and told,
Marmion and she were friends of old.
The King observed their meeting eyes,
With something like displeased surprise;
For monarchs ill can rivals brook,
Even in a word, or smile, or look.
Straight took he forth the parchment broad, [show'd:
Which Marmion's high commission
"Our Borders sack'd by many a raid,
Our peaceful liegemen robb'd," he said;
"On day of truce our Warden slain,
Stout Barton kill'd, his vassals ta'en—
Unworthy were we here to reign,
Should these for vengeance cry in vain·
Our full defiance, hate, and scorn,
Our herald has to Henry borne."

XIV.

He paused, and led where Douglas stood,
And with stern eye the pageant view'd:

I mean that Douglas, sixth of yore,
Who coronet of Angus bore,
And, when his blood and heart were high,
Did the third James in camp defy,
And all his minions led to die
On Lauder's dreary flat:
Princes and favourites long grew tame,
And trembled at the homely name
Of Archibald Bell-the-Cat;*
The same who left the dusky vale
Of Hermitage in Liddisdale,
Its dungeons and its towers,
Where Bothwell's turrets brave the air,
And Bothwell bank is blooming fair,
To fix his princely bowers.
Though now, in age, he had laid down
His armour for the peaceful gown,
And for a staff his brand,
Yet often would flash forth the fire,
That could, in youth, a monarch's ire
And minion's pride withstand;
And even that day, at council board,
Unapt to soothe his sovereign's mood,
Against the war had Angus stood,
And chafed his royal lord.*

XV.

His giant-form, like ruin'd tower,
Though fall'n its muscles' brawny vaunt,
Huge-boned, and tall, and grim, and gaunt,
Seem'd o'er the gaudy scene to lower:
His locks and beard in silver grew;
His eyebrows kept their sable hue.
Near Douglas when the Monarch stood,
His bitter speech he thus pursued:
"Lord Marmion, since these letters say
That in the North you needs must stay,
While slightest hopes of peace remain,
Uncourteous speech it were, and stern,
To say—Return to Lindisfarne,
Until my herald come again.
Then rest you in Tantallon Hold;*
Your host shall be the Douglas bold,—
A chief unlike his sires of old.
He wears their motto on his blade,*
Their blazon o'er his towers display'd;
Yet loves his sovereign to oppose,
More than to face his country's foes.
And, I bethink me, by Saint Stephen,
But e'en this morn to me was given
A prize, the first-fruits of the war,
Ta'en by a galley from Dunbar,
A bevy of the maids of Heaven.
Under your guard, these holy maids
Shall safe return to cloister shades,
And, while they at Tantallon stay,
Requiem for Cochrane's soul may say."
And, with the slaughter'd favourite's name,
Across the Monarch's brow there came
A cloud of ire, remorse, and shame.

XVI.

In answer nought could Angus speak;
His proud heart swell'd wellnigh to break:
He turn'd aside, and down his cheek
A burning tear there stole.
His hand the Monarch sudden took,
That sight his kind heart could not brook:
"Now, by the Bruce's soul,
Angus, my hasty speech forgive!
For sure as doth his spirit live,
As he said of the Douglas old,
I well may say of you,—
That never king did subject hold,
In speech more free, in war more bold,
More tender and more true:
Forgive me, Douglas, once again."—
And, while the King his hand did strain,
The old man's tears fell down like rain.
To seize the moment Marmion tried,
And whisper'd to the King aside:
"Oh! let such tears unwonted plead
For respite short from dubious deed!
A child will weep a bramble's smart,
A maid to see her sparrow part,
A stripling for a woman's heart:
But woe awaits a country, when
She sees the tears of bearded men.
Then, oh! what omen, dark and high,
When Douglas wets his manly eye!"

XVII.

Displeased was James, that stranger view'd
And tamper'd with his changing mood.
"Laugh those that can, weep those that may,"
Thus did the fiery Monarch say,
"Southward I march by break of day;
And if within Tantallon strong,
The good Lord Marmion tarries long,
Perchance our meeting next may fall
At Tamworth, in his castle-hall."—
The haughty Marmion felt the taunt,
And answer'd, grave, the royal vaunt:
"Much honour'd were my humble home,
If in its halls King James should come;
But Nottingham has archers good,
And Yorkshire men are stern of mood;
Northumbrian prickers wild and rude.
On Derby hills the paths are steep;
In Ouse and Tyne the fords are deep;
And many a banner will be torn,
And many a knight to earth be borne,
And many a sheaf of arrows spent,
Ere Scotland's King shall cross the Trent:
Yet pause, brave Prince, while yet you may!"—
The Monarch lightly turn'd away,
And to his nobles loud did call,—
"Lords, to the dance,—a hall! a hall!"†

† The ancient cry to make room for a dance, or pageant.

Himself his cloak and sword flung by,
And led Dame Heron gallantly;
And minstrels, at the royal order, [der."
Rung out—"Blue Bonnets o'er the Bor-

XVIII.

Leave we these revels now, to tell
What to Saint Hilda's maids befell,
Whose galley, as they sail'd again
To Whitby, by a Scot was ta'en.
Now at Dun-Edin did they bide,
Till James should of their fate decide;
And soon, by his command,
Were gently summon'd to prepare
To journey under Marmion's care,
As escort honour'd, safe, and fair,
Again to English land.
The Abbess told her chaplet o'er,
Nor knew which saint she should implore;
For, when she thought of Constance, sore
She fear'd Lord Marmion's mood.
And judge what Clara must have felt!
The sword, that hung in Marmion's belt,
Had drunk De Wilton's blood.
Unwittingly, King James had given,
As guard to Whitby's shades,
The man most dreaded under Heaven
By these defenceless maids:
Yet what petition could avail,
Or who would listen to the tale
Of woman, prisoner, and nun,
'Mid bustle of a war begun?
They deem'd it hopeless to avoid
The convoy of their dangerous guide.

XIX.

Their lodging, so the King assign'd,
To Marmion's, as their guardian, joined;
And thus it fell, that, passing nigh,
The Palmer caught the Abbess' eye,
Who warn'd him by a scroll,
She had a secret to reveal,
That much concern'd the Church's weal,
And health of sinner's soul;
And, with deep charge of secrecy,
She named a place to meet,
Within an open balcony,
That hung from dizzy pitch, and high,
Above the stately street;
To which, as common to each home,
At night they might in secret come.

XX.

At night, in secret, there they came,
The Palmer and the holy Dame.
The moon among the clouds rode high,
And all the city hum was by.
Upon the street, where late before
Did din of war and warriors roar,
You might have heard a pebble fall,
A beetle hum, a cricket sing,
An owlet flap his boding wing
On Giles's steeple tall.
The antique buildings, climbing high,
Whose Gothic frontlets sought the sky,
Were here wrapt deep in shade;
There on their brows the moon-beam broke,
Through the faint wreaths of silvery smoke,
And on the casements play'd.
And other light was none to see,
Save torches gliding far,
Before some chieftain of degree,
Who left the royal revelry
To bowne him for the war.—
A solemn scene the Abbess chose—
A solemn hour, her secret to disclose.

XXI.

"O, holy Palmer!" she began,—
"For sure he must be sainted man,
Whose blessed feet have trod the ground
Where the Redeemer's tomb is found,—
For His dear Church's sake, my tale
Attend, nor deem of light avail,
Though I must speak of worldly love,—
How vain to those who wed above!—
De Wilton and Lord Marmion woo'd
Clara de Clare, of Gloster's blood
(Idle it were of Whitby's dame,
To say of that same blood I came);
And once, when jealous rage was high,
Lord Marmion said despiteously,
Wilton was traitor in his heart,
And had made league with Martin Swart,*
When he came here on Simnel's part;
And only cowardice did restrain
His rebel aid on Stokefield's plain,—
And down he threw his glove:—the thing
Was tried, as wont, before the King;
Where frankly did De Wilton own,
That Swart in Gueldres he had known;
And that between them then there went
Some scroll of courteous compliment.
For this he to his castle sent;
But when his messenger return'd,
Judge how De Wilton's fury burn'd!
For in his packet there were laid
Letters that claim'd disloyal aid,
And proved King Henry's cause betray'd.
His fame, thus blighted, in the field
He strove to clear, by spear and shield;—
To clear his fame in vain he strove,
For wondrous are His ways above!
Perchance some form was unobserved;
Perchance in prayer, or faith, he swerved;
Else how could guiltless champion quail,
Or how the blessed ordeal fail?

XXII.

"His squire, who now De Wilton saw
As recreant doom'd to suffer law,
Repentant, own'd in vain,
That, while he had the scrolls in care,
A stranger maiden, passing fair,

Had drench'd him with a beverage rare;
His words no faith could gain.
With Clare alone he credence won,
Who, rather than wed Marmion,
Did to Saint Hilda's shrine repair,
To give our house her livings fair,
And die a vestal vot'ress there.
The impulse from the earth was given,
But bent her to the paths of heaven.
A purer heart, a lovelier maid,
Ne'er shelter'd her in Whitby's shade,
No, not since Saxon Edelfled;
Only one trace of earthly strain,
That for her lover's loss
She cherishes a sorrow vain,
And murmurs at the cross.—
And then her heritage;—it goes
Along the banks of Tame;
Deep fields of grain the reaper mows,
In meadows rich the heifer lows,
The falconer and huntsman knows
Its woodlands for the game.
Shame were it to Saint Hilda dear,
And I, her humble vot'ress here,
Should do a deadly sin,
Her temple spoil'd before mine eyes,
If this false Marmion such a prize
By my consent should win;
Yet hath our boisterous Monarch sworn
That Clare shall from our house be torn;
And grievous cause have I to fear,
Such mandate doth Lord Marmion bear.

XXIII.

"Now, prisoner, helpless, and betray'd
To evil power, I claim thine aid,
By every step that thou hast trod
To holy shrine and grotto dim,
By every martyr's tortured limb,
By angel, saint, and seraphim,
And by the Church of God!
For mark:—When Wilton was betray'd,
And with his squire forged letters laid,
She was, alas! that sinful maid
By whom the deed was done,—
O! shame and horror to be said!—
She was a perjured nun!
No clerk in all the land, like her,
Traced quaint and varying character.
Perchance you may a marvel deem,
That Marmion's paramour
(For such vile thing she was) should scheme
Her lover's nuptial hour;
But o'er him thus she hoped to gain,
As privy to his honour's stain,
Illimitable power:
For this she secretly retain'd
Each proof that might the plot reveal,
Instructions with his hand and seal;
And thus Saint Hilda deign'd,
Through sinner's perfidy impure,
Her house's glory to secure,
And Clare's immortal weal.

XXIV.

"'Twere long, and needless, here to tell,
How to my hand these papers fell;
With me they must not stay.
Saint Hilda keep her Abbess true!
Who knows what outrage he might do,
While journeying by the way?—
O, blessed Saint, if e'er again
I venturous leave thy calm domain,
To travel or by land or main,
Deep penance may I pay!—
Now, saintly Palmer, mark my prayer:
I give this packet to thy care,
For thee to stop they will not dare;
And O! with cautious speed,
To Wolsey's hand the papers bring,
That he may show them to the King:
And, for thy well-earn'd meed,
Thou holy man, at Whitby's shrine,
A weekly mass shall still be thine,
While priests can sing and read.—
What ail'st thou?—Speak!" For as he took
The charge, a strong emotion shook
His frame; and, e'er reply,
They heard a faint, yet shrilly tone,
Like distant clarion feebly blown,
That on the breeze did die;
And loud the Abbess shriek'd in fear,
"Saint Withold, save us!—What is here?
Look at yon City Cross!
See on its battled tower appear
Phantoms, that scutcheons seem to rear,
And blazon'd banners toss!"—

XXV.

Dun-Edin's Cross, a pillar'd stone,*
Rose on a turret octagon;
(But now is razed that monument,
Whence royal edict rang,
And voice of Scotland's law was sent
In glorious trumpet-clang.
O! be his tomb as lead to lead,
Upon its dull destroyer's head!—
A minstrel's malison is said.)—
Then on its battlements they saw
A vision, passing Nature's law,
Strange, wild, and dimly seen;
Figures that seem'd to rise and die,
Gibber and sign, advance and fly,
While nought confirm'd could ear or eye
Discern of sound or mien.
Yet darkly did it seem, as there
Heralds and pursuivants prepare,
With trumpet sound and blazon fair,
A summons to proclaim:
But indistinct the pageant proud,
As fancy forms of midnight cloud,
When flings the moon upon her shroud

A wavering tinge of flame;
It flits, expands, and shifts, till loud,
From midmost of the spectre crowd,
This awful summons came:*

XXVI.

"Prince, prelate, potentate, and peer,
Whose names I now shall call,
Scottish, or foreigner, give ear;
Subjects of him who sent me here,
At his tribunal to appear,
I summon one and all:
I cite you by each deadly sin,
That e'er hath soil'd your hearts within:
I cite you by each brutal lust,
That e'er defiled your earthly dust,—
By wrath, by pride, by fear,
By each o'er-mastering passion's tone,
By the dark grave, and dying groan!
When forty days are pass'd and gone,
I cite you, at your Monarch's throne,
To answer and appear."
Then thunder'd forth a roll of names:
The first was thine, unhappy James!
Then all thy nobles came;
Crawford, Glencairn, Montrose, Argyle,
Ross, Bothwell, Forbes, Lennox, Lyle,—
Why should I tell their separate style?
Each chief of birth and fame,
Of Lowland, Highland, Border, Isle,
Fore-doom'd to Flodden's carnage pile,
Was cited there by name;
And Marmion, Lord of Fontenaye,
Of Lutterward, and Scrivelbaye;
De Wilton, erst of Aberley,
The self-same thundering voice did say.—
But then another spoke:
"Thy fatal summons I deny,
And thine infernal Lord defy,
Appealing me to Him on High,
Who burst the sinner's yoke."
At that dread accent, with a scream,
Parted the pageant like a dream,
The summoner was gone.
Prone on her face the Abbess fell,
And fast, and fast, her beads did tell;
Her nuns came, startled by the yell,
And found her there alone.
She mark'd not, at the scene aghast,
What time, or how, the Palmer pass'd.

XXVII.

Shift we the scene.—The camp doth move,
Dun-Edin's streets are empty now,
Save when, for weal of those they love,
To pray the prayer, and vow the vow,
The tottering child, the anxious fair,
The grey-hair'd sire, with pious care,
To chapels and to shrines repair—
Where is the Palmer now? and where
The Abbess, Marmion, and Clare?—
Bold Douglas! to Tantallon fair
They journey in thy charge:
Lord Marmion rode on his right hand,
The Palmer still was with the band;
Angus, like Lindesay, did command,
That none should roam at large.
But in that Palmer's altered mien
A wondrous change might now be seen;
Freely he spoke of war,
Of marvels wrought by single hand,
When lifted for a native land;
And still look'd high, as if he plann'd
Some desperate deed afar.
His courser would he feed and stroke,
And, tucking up his sable frocke,
Would first his mettle bold provoke,
Then soothe or quell his pride.
Old Hubert said, that never one
He saw, except Lord Marmion,
A steed so fairly ride.

XXVIII.

Some half-hour's march behind, there came,
By Eustace govern'd fair,
A troop escorting Hilda's Dame,
With all her nuns, and Clare.
No audience had Lord Marmion sought;
Ever he fear'd to aggravate
Clara de Clare's suspicious hate;
And safer 'twas, he thought,
To wait till, from the nuns removed,
The influence of kinsmen loved,
And suit by Henry's self approved,
Her slow consent had wrought.
His was no flickering flame, that dies
Unless when fann'd by looks and sighs,
And lighted oft at lady's eyes;
He long'd to stretch his wide command
O'er luckless Clara's ample land:
Besides, when Wilton with him vied,
Although the pang of humbled pride
The place of jealousy supplied,
Yet conquest by that meanness won
He almost loath'd to think upon,
Led him, at times, to hate the cause
Which made him burst through honour's laws.
If e'er he loved, 'twas her alone,
Who died within that vault of stone.

XXIX.

And now, when close at hand they saw
North Berwick's town, and lofty Law,
Fitz-Eustace bade them pause awhile,
Before a venerable pile,
Whose turrets view'd, afar,
The lofty Bass, the Lambie Isle,
The ocean's peace or war.
At tolling of a bell, forth came
The convent's venerable Dame,
And pray'd Saint Hilda's Abbess rest
With her, a loved and honour'd guest,

Till Douglas should a bark prepare
To waft her back to Whitby fair.
Glad was the Abbess, you may guess,
And thank'd the Scottish Prioress;
And tedious were to tell, I ween,
The courteous speech that pass'd between.
O'erjoy'd the nuns their palfreys leave;
But when fair Clara did intend,
Like them, from horseback to descend,
Fitz-Eustace said,—"I grieve,
Fair lady, grieve e'en from my heart,
Such gentle company to part;—
Think not discourtesy,
But lords' commands must be obey'd;
And Marmion and the Douglas said,
That you must wend with me.
Lord Marmion hath a letter broad,
Which to the Scottish Earl he show'd,
Commanding that, beneath his care,
Without delay, you shall repair
To your good kinsman, Lord Fitz-Clare."

XXX.

The startled Abbess loud exclaim'd;
But she, at whom the blow was aim'd,
Grew pale as death, and cold as lead,—
She deem'd she heard her death-doom read.
"Cheer thee, my child!" the Abbess said,
"They dare not tear thee from my hand,
To ride alone with armèd band."—
"Nay, holy mother, nay,"
Fitz-Eustace said, "the lovely Clare
Will be in Lady Angus' care,
In Scotland while we stay;
And, when we move, an easy ride
Will bring us to the English side,
Female attendance to provide
Befitting Gloster's heir:
Nor thinks nor dreams my noble lord,
By slightest look, or act, or word,
To harass Lady Clare.
Her faithful guardian he will be,
Nor sue for slightest courtesy
That e'en to stranger falls,
Till he shall place her, safe and free,
Within her kinsman's halls."
He spoke, and blush'd with earnest grace;
His faith was painted on his face,
And Clare's worst fear relieved.
The Lady Abbess loud exclaim'd
On Henry, and the Douglas blamed,
Entreated, threaten'd, grieved;
To martyr, saint, and prophet pray'd,
Against Lord Marmion inveigh'd,
And call'd the Prioress to aid,
To curse with candle, bell, and book.
Her head the grave Cistertian shook:
"The Douglas, and the King," she said,
"In their commands will be obey'd;
Grieve not, nor dream that harm can fall
The maiden in Tantallon hall."

XXXI.

The Abbess, seeing strife was vain,
Assumed her wonted state again,—
For much of state she had,—
Composed her veil, and raised her head,
And—"Bid," in solemn voice she said,
"Thy master, bold and bad,
The records of his house turn o'er,
And, when he shall there written see,
That one of his own ancestry
Drove the Monks forth of Coventry,*
Bid him his fate explore!
Prancing in pride of earthly trust,
His charger hurl'd him to the dust,
And, by a base plebeian thrust,
He died his band before.
God judge 'twixt Marmion and me;
He is a Chief of high degree,
And I a poor recluse:
Yet oft, in holy writ, we see
Even such weak minister as me
May the oppressor bruise:
For thus, inspired, did Judith slay
The mighty in his sin,
And Jael thus, and Deborah"——
Here hasty Blount broke in:
"Fitz-Eustace, we must march our band;
St. Anton' fire thee! wilt thou stand
All day, with bonnet in thy hand,
To hear the lady preach?
By this good light! if thus we stay,
Lord Marmion, for our fond delay,
Will sharper sermon teach.
Come, don thy cap, and mount thy horse;
The Dame must patience take perforce."—

XXXII.

"Submit we then to force," said Clare,
"But let this barbarous lord despair
His purposed aim to win;
Let him take living, land, and life;
But to be Marmion's wedded wife
In me were deadly sin:
And if it be the King's decree,
That I must find no sanctuary,
In that inviolable dome,
Where even a homicide might come,
And safely rest his head,
Though at its open portals stood.
Thirsting to pour forth blood for blood
The kinsmen of the dead;
Yet one asylum is my own
Against the dreaded hour;
A low, a silent, and a lone,
Where kings have little power.
One victim is before me there.—
Mother, your blessing; and in prayer
Remember your unhappy Clare!"
Loud weeps the Abbess, and bestows
Kind blessings many a one:

Weeping and wailing loud arose,
Round patient Clare, the clamorous woes
Of every simple nun.
His eyes the gentle Eustace dried,
And scarce rude Blount the sight could hide.
Then took the squire her rein,
And gently led away her steed,
And, by each courteous word and deed,
To cheer her strove in vain.

XXXIII.

But scant three miles the band had rode,
When o'er a height they pass'd,
And, sudden, close before them show'd
His towers, Tantallon vast;
Broad, massive, high, and stretching far,
And held impregnable in war,
On a projecting rock they rose,
And round three sides the ocean flows,
The fourth did battled walls enclose,
And double mound and fosse.
By narrow drawbridge, outworks strong,
Through studded gates, an entrance long,
To the main court they cross.
It was a wide and stately square:
Around were lodgings, fit and fair,
And towers of various form,
Which on the court projected far,
And broke its lines quadrangular.
Here was square keep, there turret high,
Or pinnacle that sought the sky,
Whence oft the Warder could descry
The gathering ocean-storm.

XXXIV.

Here did they rest.—The princely care
Of Douglas, why should I declare,
Or say they met reception fair?
Or why the tidings say,
Which, varying, to Tantallon came,
By hurrying posts, or fleeter fame,
With ever varying day?
And, first, they heard King James had won
Etall, and Wark, and Ford; and then,
That Norham Castle strong was ta'en.
At that sore marvell'd Marmion;—
And Douglas hoped his Monarch's hand
Would soon subdue Northumberland:
But whisper'd news there came,
That, while his host inactive lay,
And melted by degrees away,
King James was dallying off the day
With Heron's wily dame.—
Such acts to chronicles I yield;
Go seek them there, and see:
Mine is a tale of Flodden Field,
And not a history.—
At length they heard the Scottish host
On that high ridge had made their post,
Which frowns o'er Millfield Plain;
And that brave Surrey many a band
Had gather'd in the southern land,
And march'd into Northumberland,
And camp at Wooler ta'en.
Marmion, like charger in the stall,
That hears, without, the trumpet-call,
Began to chafe, and swear:—
"A sorry thing to hide my head
In castle, like a fearful maid,
When such a field is near!
Needs must I see this battle-day:
Death to my fame if such a fray
Were fought, and Marmion away!
The Douglas, too, I wot not why,
Hath 'bated of his courtesy:
No longer in his halls I'll stay."
Then bade his band they should array
For march against the dawning day.

INTRODUCTION TO CANTO SIXTH.

TO RICHARD HEBER, ESQ.

Mertoun-House, Christmas.

HEAP on more wood!—the wind is chill;
But let it whistle as it will,
We'll keep our Christmas merry still.
Each age has deem'd the new-born year
The fittest time for festal cheer:
Even, heathen yet, the savage Dane
At Iol more deep the mead did drain;*
High on the beach his galleys drew,
And feasted all his pirate crew;
Then in his low and pine-built hall,
Where shields and axes deck'd the wall,
They gorged upon the half-dress'd steer;
Caroused in seas of sable beer;
While round, in brutal jest, were thrown
The half-gnaw'd rib and marrow-bone:
Or listen'd all, in grim delight,
While Scalds yell'd out the joys of fight.
Then forth, in frenzy, would they hie,
While wildly-loose their red locks fly,
And dancing round the blazing pile,
They make such barbarous mirth the while,
As best might to the mind recall
The boisterous joys of Odin's hall.

And well our Christian sires of old
Loved when the year its course had roll'd,
And brought blithe Christmas back again,
With all his hospitable train.
Domestic and religious rite
Gave honour to the holy night;
On Christmas eve the bells were rung;
On Christmas eve the mass was sung:
That only night in all the year,
Saw the stoled priest the chalice rear.*
The damsel donn'd her kirtle sheen;
The hall was dress'd with holly green;
Forth to the wood did merry-men go,
To gather in the mistletoe.

Then open'd wide the Baron's hall
To vassal, tenant, serf, and all;
Power laid his rod of rule aside,
And Ceremony doff'd his pride.
The heir, with roses in his shoes,
That night might village partner choose;
The Lord, underogating, share
The vulgar game of "post and pair."
All hail'd with uncontroll'd delight,
And general voice, the happy night,
That to the cottage, as the crown,
Brought tidings of salvation down.

The fire, with well-dried logs supplied,
Went roaring up the chimney wide;
The huge hall-table's oaken face,
Scrubb'd till it shone, the day to grace,
Bore then upon its massive board
No mark to part the squire and lord.
Then was brought in the lusty brawn,
By old blue-coated serving-man;
Then the grim boar's head frown'd on high,
Crested with bays and rosemary.
Well can the green-garb'd ranger tell,
How, when, and where, the monster fell;
What dogs before his death he tore,
And all the baiting of the boar.
The wassel round, in good brown bowls,
Garnish'd with ribbons, blithely trowls.
There the huge sirloin reek'd; hard by
Plum-porridge stood, and Christmas pie;
Nor fail'd old Scotland to produce,
At such high tide, her savoury goose.
Then came the merry maskers in,
And carols roar'd with blithesome din;
If unmelodious was the song,
It was a hearty note, and strong.
Who lists may in their mumming see
Traces of ancient mystery; *
White shirts supplied the masquerade,
And smutted cheeks the visors made;
But, O! what maskers, richly dight,
Can boast of bosoms half so light!
England was merry England, when
Old Christmas brought his sports again.
'Twas Christmas broach'd the mightiest ale;
'Twas Christmas told the merriest tale;
A Christmas gambol oft could cheer
The poor man's heart through half the year.

Still linger, in our northern clime,
Some remnants of the good old time;
And still, within our valleys here,
We hold the kindred title dear, [claim
Even when, perchance, its far-fetched
To Southern ear sounds empty name;
For course of blood, our proverbs deem,
Is warmer than the mountain-stream.
And thus, my Christmas still I hold
Where my great grandsire came of old,
With amber beard, and flaxen hair,
And reverend apostolic air—
The feast and holy-tide to share,
And mix sobriety with wine,
And honest mirth with thoughts divine:
Small thought was his, in after time
E'er to be hitch'd into a rhyme.
The simple sire could only boast,
That he was loyal to his cost;
The banish'd race of kings revered,
And lost his land,—but kept his beard.

In these dear halls, where welcome kind
Is with fair liberty combined;
Where cordial friendship gives the hand,
And flies constraint the magic wand
Of the fair dame that rules the land.
Little we heed the tempest drear,
While music, mirth, and social cheer,
Speed on their wings the passing year.
And Mertoun's halls are fair e'en now,
When not a leaf is on the bough.
Tweed loves them well, and turns again,
As loath to leave the sweet domain,
And holds his mirror to her face,
And clips her with a close embrace:—
Gladly as he, we seek the dome,
And as reluctant turn us home.

How just that, at this time of glee,
My thoughts should, Heber, turn to thee!
For many a merry hour we've known,
And heard the chimes of midnight's tone.
Cease, then, my friend! a moment cease,
And leave these classic tomes in peace!
Of Roman and of Grecian lore,
Sure mortal brain can hold no more.
These ancients, as Noll Bluff might say,
"Were pretty fellows in their day;"
But time and tide o'er all prevail—
On Christmas Eve a Christmas tale—
Of wonder and of war—"Profane!
What! leave the lofty Latian strain,
Her stately prose, her verse's charms,
To hear the clash of rusty arms:
In Fairy Land or Limbo lost,
To jostle conjurer and ghost,
Goblin and witch!"—Nay, Heber dear,
Before you touch my charter, hear:
Though Leyden aids, alas! no more,
My cause with many-languaged lore,
This may I say:—in realms of death
Ulysses meets Alcides' *wraith;*
Æneas, upon Thracia's shore,
The ghost of murder'd Polydore;
For omens, we in Livy cross,
At every turn, *locutus Bos.*
As grave and duly speaks that ox,
As if he told the price of stocks,
Or held, in Rome republican,
The place of Common-councilman.

All nations have their omens drear,
Their legends wild of woe and fear.
To Cambria look—the peasant see,
Bethink him of Glendowerdy,
And shun "the spirit's Blasted Tree."
The Highlander, whose red claymore
The battle turn'd on Maida's shore,
Will, on a Friday morn, look pale,
If ask'd to tell a fairy tale:*
He fears the vengeful Elfin King,
Who leaves that day his grassy ring:
Invisible to human ken,
He walks among the sons of men.

Didst e'er, dear Heber, pass along
Beneath the towers of Franchémont,
Which, like an eagle's nest in air,
Hang o'er the stream and hamlet fair?
Deep in their vaults, the peasants say,
A mighty treasure buried lay, [wrong,
Amass'd through rapine and through
By the last Lord of Franchémont,*
The iron chest is bolted hard;
A huntsman sits, its constant guard;
Around his neck his horn is hung,
His hanger in his belt is slung;
Before his feet his blood-hounds lie:
An 'twere not for his gloomy eye,
Whose withering glance no heart can
As true a huntsman doth he look, [brook,
As bugle e'er in brake did sound,
Or ever halloo'd to a hound.
To chase the fiend, and win the prize,
In that same dungeon ever tries
An aged necromantic priest;
It is an hundred years at least,
Since 'twixt them first the strife begun,
And neither yet has lost nor won.
And oft the Conjurer's words will make
The stubborn Demon groan and quake;
And oft the bands of iron break,
Or bursts one lock, that still amain,
Fast as 'tis open'd, shuts again.
That magic strife within the tomb
May last until the day of doom,
Unless the adept shall learn to tell
The very word that clench'd the spell,
When Franch'mont lock'd the treasure cell.
An hundred years are pass'd and gone,
And scarce three letters has he won.

Such general superstition may
Excuse for old Pitscottie say;
Whose gossip history has given
My song the messenger from Heaven,†
That warn'd, in Lithgow, Scotland's King,
Nor less the infernal summoning;

† See Note to Canto IV., Stanza xiv.

May pass the Monk of Durham's tale,
Whose demon fought in Gothic mail;
May pardon plead for Fordun grave,
Who told of Gifford's Goblin-Cave.
But why such instances to you,
Who, in an instant, can renew
Your treasured hoards of various lore,
And furnish twenty thousand more? [rest
Hoards, not like theirs whose volumes
Like treasures in the Franch'mont chest,
While gripple owners still refuse
To others what they cannot use;
Give them the priest's whole century,
They shall not spell you letters three;
Their pleasure in the books the same
The magpie takes in pilfer'd gem.
Thy volumes, open as thy heart,
Delight, amusement, science, art,
To every ear and eye impart;
Yet who of all who thus employ them,
Can like the owner's self enjoy them?—
But, hark! I hear the distant drum!
The day of Flodden Field is come.—
Adieu, dear Heber! life and health,
And store of literary wealth!

CANTO SIXTH.

THE BATTLE.

I.

WHILE great events were on the gale,
And each hour brought a varying tale,
And the demeanour, changed and cold,
Of Douglas, fretted Marmion bold,
And, like the impatient steed of war,
He snuffed the battle from afar;
And hopes were none, that back again
Herald should come from Terouenne,
Where England's King in leaguer lay,
Before decisive battle-day; [Clare
Whilst these things were, the mournful
Did in the Dame's devotions share:
For the good Countess ceaseless pray'd
To Heaven and Saints her sons to aid,
And, with short interval, did pass
From prayer to book, from book to mass,
And all in high Baronial pride,—
A life both dull and dignified;—
Yet, as Lord Marmion nothing press'd
Upon her intervals of rest,
Dejected Clara well could bear
The formal state, the lengthen'd prayer,
Though dearest to her wounded heart
The hours that she might spend apart.

II.

I said, Tantallon's dizzy steep
Hung o'er the margin of the deep.
Many a rude tower and rampart there
Repell'd the insult of the air,

Which, when the tempest vex'd the sky,
Half breeze, half spray, came whistling
Above the rest, a turret square [by.
Did o'er its Gothic entrance bear,
Of sculpture rude, a stony shield;
The Bloody Heart was in the Field,
And in the chief three mullets stood,
The cognizance of Douglas blood.
The turret held a narrow stair,
Which, mounted, gave you access where
A parapet's embattled row
Did seaward round the castle go.
Sometimes in dizzy steps descending,
Sometimes in narrow circuit bending,
Sometimes in platform broad extending,
Its varying circle did combine
Bulwark, and bartizan, and line,
And bastion, tower, and vantage-ooign;
Above the booming ocean leant
The far-projecting battlement;
The billows burst, in ceaseless flow,
Upon the precipice below.
Where'er Tantallon faced the land,
Gate-works, and walls, were strongly
No need upon the sea-girt side—[mann'd;
The steepy rock, and frantic tide,
Approach of human step denied;
And thus these lines, and ramparts rude,
Were left in deepest solitude.

III.

And, for they were so lonely, Clare
Would to these battlements repair,
And muse upon her sorrows there,
And list the sea-bird's cry;
Or slow, like noon-tide ghost, would glide
Along the dark-grey bulwarks' side,
And ever on the heaving tide
Look down with weary eye.
Oft did the cliff, and swelling main,
Recall the thoughts of Whitby's fane,—
A home she ne'er might see again;
For she had laid adown,
So Douglas bade, the hood and veil,
And frontlet of the cloister pale,
And Benedictine gown:
It were unseemly sight, he said,
A novice out of convent shade.—
Now her bright locks, with sunny glow,
Again adorn'd her brow of snow;
Her mantle rich, whose borders, round,
A deep and fretted broidery bound,
In golden foldings sought the ground;
Of holy ornament, alone
Remain'd a cross with ruby stone;
And often did she look
On that which in her hand she bore,
With velvet bound, and broider'd o'er,
Her breviary book.
In such a place, so lone, so grim,
At dawning pale, or twilight dim,
It fearful would have been
To meet a form so richly dress'd,
With book in hand, and cross on breast,
And such a woeful mien.
Fitz-Eustace, loitering with his bow,
To practise on the gull and crow,
Saw her, at distance, gliding slow,
And did by Mary swear,—
Some love-lorn Fay she might have been,
Or, in Romance, some spell-bound Queen;
For ne'er in work-day world, was seen
A form so witching fair.

IV.

Once walking thus, at evening tide,
It chanced a gliding sail she spied,
And, sighing, thought—"The Abbess, there,
Perchance, does to her home repair;
Her peaceful rule, where Duty, free,
Walks hand in hand with Charity;
Where oft Devotion's trancèd glow
Can such a glimpse of Heaven bestow,
That the enraptured sisters see
High vision and deep mystery;
The very form of Hilda fair,
Hovering upon the sunny air,
And smiling on her votaries' prayer.
O! wherefore, to my duller eye,
Did still the Saint her form deny?
Was it, that, sear'd by sinful scorn,
My heart could neither melt nor burn?
Or lie my warm affections low,
With him that taught them first to glow?
Yet, gentle Abbess, well I knew,
To pay thy kindness grateful due,
And well could brook the mild command,
That ruled thy simple maiden band.
How different now! condemned to bide
My doom from this dark tyrant's pride.—
But Marmion has to learn, ere long,
That constant mind, and hate of wrong,
Descended to a feeble girl,
From Red de Clare, stout Gloster's Earl:
Of such a stem, a sapling weak,
He ne'er shall bend, although he break.

V.

"But see!—what makes this armour [here?"—
For in her path there lay
Targe, corslet, helm;—she view'd them [fear,
near.—
"The breast-plate pierced!—Ay, much I
Weak fence wert thou 'gainst foeman's spear,
That hath made fatal entrance here,
As these dark blood-gouts say.—
Thus Wilton!—Oh! not corslet's ward,
Not truth, as diamond pure and hard,
Could be thy manly bosom's guard,
On yon disastrous day!"—

She raised her eyes in mournful mood,—
WILTON himself before her stood!
It might have seem'd his passing ghost,
For every youthful grace was lost;
And joy unwonted, and surprise,
Gave their strange wildness to his eyes.—
Expect not, noble dames and lords,
That I can tell such scene in words:
What skilful limner e'er would choose
To paint the rainbow's varying hues,
Unless to mortal it were given
To dip his brush in dyes of heaven?
Far less can my weak line declare
Each changing passion's shade;
Brightening to rapture from despair,
Sorrow, surprise, and pity there,
And joy, with her angelic air,
And hope, that paints the future fair,
Their varying hues display'd:
Each o'er its rival's ground extending,
Alternate conquering, shifting, blending,
Till all, fatigued, the conflict yield,
And mighty Love retains the field.
Shortly I tell what then he said,
By many a tender word delay'd,
And modest blush, and bursting sigh,
And question kind, and fond reply:—

VI.

DE WILTON'S HISTORY.

"Forget we that disastrous day,
When senseless in the lists I lay.
Thence dragg'd,—but how I cannot know,
For sense and recollection fled,—
I found me on a pallet low,
Within my ancient beadsman's shed.
Austin,—Remember'st thou, my Clare,
How thou didst blush, when the old man,
When first our infant love began,
Said we would make a matchless pair?—
Menials, and friends, and kinsmen fled
From the degraded traitor's bed,—
He only held my burning head,
And tended me for many a day,
While wounds and fever held their sway.
But far more needful was his care,
When sense return'd to wake despair;
For I did tear the closing wound,
And dash me frantic on the ground,
If e'er I heard the name of Clare.
At length, to calmer reason brought,
Much by his kind attendance wrought,
With him I left my native strand,
And, in a Palmer's weeds array'd,
My hated name and form to shade,
I journey'd many a land;
No more a lord of rank and birth,
But mingled with the dregs of earth.
Oft Austin for my reason fear'd,
When I would sit, and deeply brood
On dark revenge, and deeds of blood,
Or wild mad schemes uprear'd.
My friend at length fell sick, and said,
God would remove him soon:
And, while upon his dying bed,
He begg'd of me a boon—
If e'er my deadliest enemy
Beneath my brand should conquer'd lie,
Even then my mercy should awake,
And spare his life for Austin's sake.

VII.

"Still restless as a second Cain,
To Scotland next my route was ta'en,
Full well the paths I knew.
Fame of my fate made various sound,
That death in pilgrimage I found,
That I had perish'd of my wound,—
None cared which tale was true:
And living eye could never guess
De Wilton in his Palmer's dress;
For now that sable slough is shed,
And trimm'd my shaggy beard and head,
I scarcely know me in the glass.
A chance most wondrous did provide,
That I should be that Baron's guide—
I will not name his name!—
Vengeance to God alone belongs;
But, when I think on all my wrongs,
My blood is liquid flame!
And ne'er the time shall I forget,
When, in a Scottish hostel set,
Dark looks we did exchange:
What were his thoughts I cannot tell;
But in my bosom muster'd Hell
Its plans of dark revenge.

VIII.

"A word of vulgar augury,
That broke from me, I scarce knew why,
Brought on a village tale;
Which wrought upon his moody sprite,
And sent him armèd forth by night.
I borrow'd steed and mail,
And weapons, from his sleeping band;
And, passing from a postern door,
We met, and 'counter'd hand to hand,—
He fell on Gifford moor.
For the death-stroke my brand I drew
(O then my helmèd head he knew,
The Palmer's cowl was gone),
Then had three inches of my blade
The heavy debt of vengeance paid,—
My hand the thought of Austin staid;
I left him there alone.—
O good old man! even from the grave
Thy spirit could thy master save:
If I had slain my foeman, ne'er
Had Whitby's Abbess, in her fear,
Given to my hand this packet dear,

Of power to clear my injured fame,
And vindicate De Wilton's name.—
Perchance you heard the Abbess tell
Of the strange pageantry of Hell,
That broke our secret speech—
It rose from the infernal shade,
Or featly was some juggle play'd,
A tale of peace to teach.
Appeal to Heaven I judged was best,
When my name came among the rest.

IX.

"Now here, within Tantallon Hold,
To Douglas late my tale I told,
To whom my house was known of old.
Won by my proofs, his falchion bright
This eve anew shall dub me knight.
These were the arms that once did turn
The tide of fight on Otterburne,
And Harry Hotspur forced to yield,
When the Dead Douglas won the field.
These Angus gave—his armourer's care,
Ere morn, shall every breach repair;
For nought, he said, was in his halls,
But ancient armour on the walls,
And agèd chargers in the stalls,
And women, priests, and grey-hair'd men;
The rest were all in Twisel glen.
And now I watch my armour here,
By law of arms, till midnight's near;
Then, once again a belted knight,
Seek Surrey's camp with dawn of light.

X.

"There soon again we meet, my Clare!
This Baron means to guide thee there:
Douglas reveres his King's command,
Else would he take thee from his band.
And there thy kinsman, Surrey, too,
Will give De Wilton justice due.
Now meeter far for martial broil,
Firmer my limbs, and strung by toil,
Once more"——"O Wilton! must we then
Risk new-found happiness again,
Trust fate of arms once more?
And is there not an humble glen,
Where we, content and poor,
Might build a cottage in the shade,
A shepherd thou, and I to aid
Thy task on dale and moor?——
That reddening brow!—too well I know,
Not even thy Clare can peace bestow,
While falsehood stains thy name:
Go then to fight! Clare bids thee go!
Clare can a warrior's feelings know,
And weep a warrior's shame;
Can Red Earl Gilbert's spirit feel,
Buckle the spurs upon thy heel,
And belt thee with thy brand of steel,
And send thee forth to fame!"

XI.

That night, upon the rocks and bay,
The midnight moonbeam slumbering lay,
And pour'd its silver light, and pure,
Through loop-hole, and through embra-
Upon Tantallon tower and hall; [zure,
But chief where archèd windows wide,
Illuminate the chapel's pride,
The sober glances fall.
Much was their need; though seam'd with scars,
Two veterans of the Douglas' wars,
Though two grey priests were there,
And each a blazing torch held high,
You could not by their blaze descry
The chapel's carving fair.
Amid that dim and smoky light,
Chequering the silver moonshine bright,
A bishop by the altar stood,
A noble lord of Douglas blood,
With mitre sheen, and rocquet white.
Yet showed his meek and thoughtful eye
But little pride of prelacy;
More pleased that, in a barbarous age,
He gave rude Scotland Virgil's page,
Than that beneath his rule he held
The bishopric of fair Dunkeld.
Beside him ancient Angus stood,
Doff'd his furr'd gown and sable hood
O'er his huge form and visage pale,
He wore a cap and shirt of mail;
And lean'd his large and wrinkled hand
Upon the huge and sweeping brand
Which wont of yore, in battle fray,
His foeman's limbs to shred away,
As wood-knife lops the sapling spray.*
He seem'd as, from the tombs around
Rising at judgment-day,
Some giant Douglas may be found
In all his old array;
So pale his face, so huge his limb,
So old his arms, his look so grim.

XII.

Then at the altar Wilton kneels,
And Clare the spurs bound on his heels;
And think what next he must have felt,
At buckling of the falchion belt!
And judge how Clara changed her hue,
While fastening to her lover's side
A friend, which, though in danger tried,
He once had found untrue!
Then Douglas struck him with his blade:
"Saint Michael and Saint Andrew aid,
I dub thee knight.
Arise, Sir Ralph, De Wilton's heir!
For King, for Church, for Lady fair,
See that thou fight."—
And Bishop Gawain, as he rose,
Said—"Wilton! grieve not for thy woes,
Disgrace, and trouble;

For He, who honour best bestows,
May give thee double."—
De Wilton sobb'd, for sob he must—
"Where'er I meet a Douglas, trust
That Douglas is my brother!"—
"Nay, nay," old Angus said, "not so;
To Surrey's camp thou now must go,
Thy wrongs no longer smother.
I have two sons in yonder field;
And, if thou meet'st them under shield,
Upon them bravely—do thy worst;
And foul fall him that blenches first!"

XIII.

Not far advanced was morning day,
When Marmion did his troop array
To Surrey's camp to ride;
He had safe-conduct for his band,
Beneath the royal seal and hand,
And Douglas gave a guide:
The ancient Earl, with stately grace,
Would Clara on her palfrey place,
And whisper'd in an under tone,
"Let the hawk stoop, his prey is flown."—
The train from out the castle drew,
But Marmion stopp'd to bid adieu:—
"Though something I might plain," he said,
"Of cold respect to stranger guest,
Sent hither by your King's behest,
While in Tantallon's towers I staid;
Part we in friendship from your land,
And, noble Earl, receive my hand."—
But Douglas round him drew his cloak,
Folded his arms, and thus he spoke:—
"My manors, halls, and bowers, shall still
Be open, at my Sovereign's will,
To each one whom he lists, howe'er
Unmeet to be the owner's peer.
My castles are my King's alone,
From turret to foundation-stone—
The hand of Douglas is his own;
And never shall in friendly grasp
The hand of such as Marmion clasp."—

XIV.

Burn'd Marmion's swarthy cheek like fire,
And shook his very frame for ire,
And—"This to me!" he said,—
"An 'twere not for thy hoary beard,
Such hand as Marmion's had not spared
To cleave the Douglas' head!
And, first, I tell thee, haughty Peer,
He who does England's message here,
Although the meanest in her state,
May well, proud Angus, be thy mate:
And, Douglas, more I tell thee here,
Even in thy pitch of pride,
Here in thy hold, thy vassals near
(Nay, never look upon your lord,
And lay your hands upon your sword),
I tell thee, thou'rt defied!
And if thou said'st I am not peer
To any lord in Scotland here,
Lowland or Highland, far or near,
Lord Angus, thou hast lied!"—
On the Earl's cheek the flush of rage
O'ercame the ashen hue of age:
Fierce he broke forth,—"And darest thou
To beard the lion in his den,
The Douglas in his hall?
And hopest thou hence unscathed to go?—
No, by Saint Bride of Bothwell, no!
Up drawbridge, grooms!—what, Warder,
Let the portcullis fall.*
Lord Marmion turn'd,—well was his need,
And dash'd the rowels in his steed,
Like arrow through the archway sprung,
The ponderous grate behind him rung:
To pass there was such scanty room,
The bars, descending, razed his plume.

XV.

The steed along the drawbridge flies,
Just as it trembled on the rise;
Nor lighter does the swallow skim
Along the smooth lake's level brim:
And when Lord Marmion reach'd his band,
He halts, and turns with clenchèd hand,
And shout of loud defiance pours,
And shook his gauntlet at the towers.
"Horse! horse!" the Douglas cried, "and chase!"
But soon he rein'd his fury's pace:
"A royal messenger he came,
Though most unworthy of the name.—
A letter forged! Saint Jude to speed!
Did ever knight so foul a deed!*
At first in heart it liked me ill,
When the King praised his clerkly skill.
Thanks to Saint Bothan, son of mine,
Save Gawain, ne'er could pen a line:
So swore I, and I swear it still,
Let my boy-bishop fret his fill.—
Saint Mary mend my fiery mood!
Old age ne'er cools the Douglas blood,
I thought to slay him where he stood.
'Tis pity of him too," he cried:
"Bold can he speak, and fairly ride;
I warrant him a warrior tried."
With this his mandate he recalls,
And slowly seeks his castle halls.

XVI.

The day in Marmion's journey wore;
Yet, ere his passion's gust was o'er,
They cross'd the heights of Stanrig-moor.
His troop more closely there he scann'd,
And miss'd the Palmer from the band.—
"Palmer or not," young Blount did say,
"He parted at the peep of day;
Good sooth, it was in strange array."—
"In what array?" said Marmion, quick.
"My Lord, I ill can spell the trick;

But all night long, with clink and bang,
Close to my couch did hammers clang;
At dawn the falling drawbridge rang,
And from a loop-hole while I peep,
Old Bell-the-Cat came from the Keep,
Wrapp'd in a gown of sables fair,
As fearful of the morning air;
Beneath, when that was blown aside,
A rusty shirt of mail I spied,
By Archibald won in bloody work,
Against the Saracen and Turk:
Last night it hung not in the hall;
I thought some marvel would befall.
And next I saw them saddled lead
Old Cheviot forth, the Earl's best steed;
A matchless horse, though something old,
Prompt in his paces, cool and bold.
I heard the Sheriff Sholto say,
The Earl did much the Master pray
To use him on the battle-day;
But he preferr'd"——"Nay, Henry, cease!
Thou sworn horse-courser, hold thy peace.—
Eustace, thou bear'st a brain—I pray
What did Blount see at break of day?"—

XVII.

"In brief, my lord, we both descried
(For then I stood by Henry's side)
The Palmer mount, and outwards ride,
Upon the Earl's own favourite steed:
All sheathed he was in armour bright,
And much resembled that same knight,
Subdued by you in Cotswold fight:
Lord Angus wish'd him speed."—
The instant that Fitz-Eustace spoke,
A sudden light on Marmion broke;—
"Ah! dastard fool, to reason lost!"
He mutter'd; "'Twas nor fay nor ghost
I met upon the moonlight wold,
But living man of earthly mould.—
O dotage blind and gross!
Had I but fought as wont, one thrust
Had laid De Wilton in the dust,
My path no more to cross.—
How stand we now?—he told his tale
To Douglas; and with some avail;
'Twas therefore gloom'd his rugged brow.—
Will Surrey dare to entertain,
'Gainst Marmion, charge disproved and vain?
Small risk of that, I trow.
Yet Clare's sharp questions must I shun;
Must separate Constance from the Nun—
O, what a tangled web we weave,
When first we practise to deceive!
A Palmer too!—no wonder why
I felt rebuked beneath his eye:
I might have known there was but one
Whose look could quell Lord Marmion."

XVIII.

Stung with these thoughts, he urged to speed
His troop, and reach'd, at eve, the Tweed,
Where Lennel's convent closed their march.
(There now is left but one frail arch,
Yet mourn thou not its cells;
Our time a fair exchange has made;
Hard by, in hospitable shade,
A reverend pilgrim dwells,
Well worth the whole Bernardine brood,
That ere wore sandal, frock, or hood.)
Yet did Saint Bernard's Abbot there
Give Marmion entertainment fair,
And lodging for his train and Clare.
Next morn the Baron climb'd the tower
To view afar the Scottish power,
Encamp'd on Flodden edge:
The white pavilions made a show,
Like remnants of the winter snow,
Along the dusky ridge.
Lord Marmion look'd:—at length his eye
Unusual movement might descry
Amid the shifting lines:
The Scottish host drawn out appears,
For, flashing on the hedge of spears,
The eastern sunbeam shines.
Their front now deepening, now extending;
Their flank inclining, wheeling, bending,
Now drawing back, and now descending,
The skilful Marmion well could know,
They watch'd the motions of some foe,
Who travers'd on the plain below.

XIX.

Even so it was. From Flodden ridge
The Scots beheld the English host
Leave Barmore-wood, their evening post,
And heedful watch'd them as they cross'd
The Till by Twisel Bridge.*
High sight it is, and haughty, while
They dive into the deep defile;
Beneath the cavern'd cliff they fall,
Beneath the castle's airy wall.
By rock, by oak, by hawthorn-tree,
Troop after troop are disappearing;
Troop after troop their banners rearing,
Upon the eastern bank you see.
Still pouring down the rocky den,
Where flows the sullen Till,
And rising from the dim-wood glen,
Standards on standards, men on men,
In slow succession still,
And, sweeping o'er the Gothic arch,
And pressing on, in ceaseless march,
To gain the opposing hill.
That morn, to many a trumpet clang,
Twisel! thy rock's deep echo rang;
And many a chief of birth and rank,
Saint Helen! at thy fountain drank.

Thy hawthorn glade, which now we see
In spring-tide bloom so lavishly,
Had then from many an axe its doom,
To give the marching columns room.

XX.

And why stands Scotland idly now,
Dark Flodden! on thy airy brow,
Since England gains the pass the while,
And struggles through the deep defile?
What checks the fiery soul of James?
Why sits that champion of the dames
Inactive on his steed,
And sees, between him and his land,
Between him and Tweed's southern strand,
His host Lord Surrey lead? [brand?—
What 'vails the vain knight-errant's
O, Douglas, for thy leading wand!
Fierce Randolph, for thy speed!
O for one hour of Wallace wight,
Or well-skill'd Bruce, to rule the fight,
And cry—"Saint Andrew and our right!"
Another sight had seen that morn,
From Fate's dark book a leaf been torn,
And Flodden had been Bannockbourne!—
The precious hour has pass'd in vain,
And England's host has gain'd the plain;
Wheeling their march, and circling still,
Around the base of Flodden hill.

XXI.

Ere yet the bands met Marmion's eye,
Fitz-Eustace shouted loud and high,
"Hark! hark! my lord, an English drum!
And see ascending squadrons come
Between Tweed's river and the hill,
Foot, horse, and cannon:—hap what hap,
My basnet to a prentice cap,
Lord Surrey's o'er the Till!—
Yet more! yet more!—how far array'd
They file from out the hawthorn shade,
And sweep so gallant by!
With all their banners bravely spread,
And all their armour flashing high,
Saint George might waken from the dead,
To see fair England's standards fly."—
"Stint in thy prate," quoth Blount,
"thou'dst best,
And listen to our lord's behest."—
With kindling brow Lord Marmion said,—
"This instant be our band array'd;
The river must be quickly cross'd,
That we may join Lord Surrey's host.
If fight King James,—as well I trust,
That fight he will, and fight he must,—
The Lady Clare behind our lines
Shall tarry, while the battle joins."

XXII.

Himself he swift on horseback threw,
Scarce to the Abbot bade adieu;
Far less would listen to his prayer,
To leave behind the helpless Clare.
Down to the Tweed his band he drew,
And mutter'd, as the flood they view,
"The pheasant in the falcon's claw,
He scarce will yield to please a daw:
Lord Angus may the Abbot awe,
So Clare shall bide with me."
Then on that dangerous ford, and deep,
Where to the Tweed Leat's eddies creep,
He ventured desperately:
And not a moment will he bide,
Till squire, or groom, before him ride;
Headmost of all he stems the tide,
And stems it gallantly.
Eustace held Clare upon her horse,
Old Hubert led her rein,
Stoutly they braved the current's course,
And, though far downward driven per force,
The southern bank they gain;
Behind them straggling, came to shore,
As best they might, the train:
Each o'er his head his yew-bow bore,
A caution not in vain:
Deep need that day that every string,
By wet unharm'd, should sharply ring.
A moment then Lord Marmion staid,
And breathed his steed, his men array'd,
Then forward moved his band,
Until, Lord Surrey's rear-guard won,
He halted by a Cross of Stone,
That, on a hillock standing lone,
Did all the field command.

XXIII.

Hence might they see the full array
Of either host, for deadly fray;*
Their marshall'd lines stretch'd east and west,
And fronted north and south,
And distant salutation pass'd
From the loud cannon mouth;
Not in the close successive rattle,
That breathes the voice of modern battle,
But slow and far between.—
The hillock gain'd, Lord Marmion staid:
"Here, by this Cross," he gently said,
"You well may view the scene.
Here shalt thou tarry, lovely Clare:
O! think of Marmion in thy prayer!—
Thou wilt not?—well,—no less my care
Shall, watchful, for thy weal prepare.—
You, Blount and Eustace, are her guard,
With ten picked archers of my train;
With England if the day go hard,
To Berwick speed amain.—
But if we conquer, cruel maid,
My spoils shall at your feet be laid,
When here we meet again."
He waited not for answer there,
And would not mark the maid's despair,
Nor heed the discontented look

From either squire; but spurr'd amain,
And, dashing through the battle plain,
His way to Surrey took.

XXIV.

"——The good Lord Marmion, by my life!
Welcome to danger's hour!—
Short greeting serves in time of strife:—
Thus have I ranged my power:—
Myself will rule this central host,
Stout Stanley fronts their right,
My sons command the vanward post,
With Brian Tunstall, stainless knight;*
Lord Dacre, with his horsemen light,
Shall be in rear-ward of the fight,
And succour those that need it most.
Now gallant Marmion, well I know,
Would gladly to the vanguard go;
Edmund, the Admiral, Tunstall there,
With thee their charge will blithely share;
There fight thine own retainers too,
Beneath De Burg, thy steward true."—
"Thanks, noble Surrey!" Marmion said,
Nor farther greeting there he paid;
But parting like a thunderbolt,
First in the vanguard made a halt,
Where such a shout there rose
Of "Marmion! Marmion!" that the cry,
Up Flodden Mountain shrilling high,
Startled the Scottish foes.

XXV.

Blount and Fitz-Eustace rested still
With Lady Clare upon the hill;
On which (for far the day was spent)
The western sunbeams now were bent.
The cry they heard, its meaning knew,
Could plain their distant comrades view:
Sadly to Blount did Eustace say,
"Unworthy office here to stay!
No hope of gilded spurs to-day.—
But see! look up!—on Flodden bent
The Scottish foe has fired his tent."
And sudden, as he spoke,
From the sharp ridges of the hill,
All downward to the banks of Till,
Was wreathed in sable smoke.
Volumed and fast, and rolling far,
The cloud enveloped Scotland's war,
As down the hill they broke;
Nor martial shout, nor minstrel tone,
Announced their march; their tread alone,
At times one warning trumpet blown,
At times a stifled hum,
Told England, from his mountain-throne
King James did rushing come.—
Scarce could they hear or see their foes,
Until at weapon-point they close.—
They close, in clouds of smoke and dust,
With sword-sway, and with lance's thrust;
And such a yell was there,
Of sudden and portentous birth,
As if men fought upon the earth,
And fiends in upper air;
Oh! life and death were in the shout,
Recoil and rally, charge and rout,
And triumph and despair.
Long look'd the anxious squires; their eye
Could in the darkness nought descry.

XXVI.

At length the freshening western blast
Aside the shroud of battle cast;
And, first, the ridge of mingled spears
Above the brightening cloud appears;
And in the smoke the pennons flew,
As in the storm the white sea-mew.
Then mark'd they, dashing broad and far,
The broken billows of the war,
And plumèd crests of chieftains brave,
Floating like foam upon the wave;
But nought distinct they see:
Wide raged the battle on the plain;
Spears shook, and falchions flash'd amain;
Fell England's arrow-flight like rain;
Crests rose, and stoop'd, and rose again,
Wild and disorderly.
Amid the scene of tumult, high
They saw Lord Marmion's falcon fly:
And stainless Tunstall's banner white,
And Edmund Howard's lion bright,
Still bear them bravely in the fight;
Although against them come,
Of gallant Gordons many a one,
And many a stubborn Badenoch-man,
And many a rugged Border clan,
With Huntly, and with Home.

XXVII.

Far on the left, unseen the while,
Stanley broke Lennox and Argyle:
Though there the western mountaineer
Rush'd with bare bosom on the spear,
And flung the feeble targe aside,
And with both hands the broadsword plied,
'Twas vain:—But Fortune, on the right,
With fickle smile, cheer'd Scotland's fight.
Then fell that spotless banner white,
The Howard's lion fell;
Yet still Lord Marmion's falcon flew
With wavering flight, while fiercer grew
Around the battle-yell.
The Border slogan rent the sky!
A Home! a Gordon! was the cry:
Loud were the clanging blows;
Advanced,—forced back,—now low, now high,
The pennon sunk and rose;
As bends the bark's mast in the gale,
When rent are rigging, shrouds, and sail,
It waver'd 'mid the foes.
No longer Blount the view could bear:
"By Heaven and all its saints, I swear

I will not see it lost!
Fitz-Eustace, you with Lady Clare
May bid your beads, and patter prayer,—
I gallop to the host."
And to the fray he rode amain,
Follow'd by all the archer train.
The fiery youth, with desperate charge,
Made, for a space, an opening large,—
The rescued banner rose,—
But darkly closed the war around,
Like pine-tree, rooted from the ground,
It sunk among the foes.
Then Eustace mounted too:—yet staid,
As loath to leave the helpless maid,
When, fast as shaft can fly,
Blood-shot his eyes, his nostrils spread,
The loose rein dangling from his head,
Housing and saddle bloody red,
Lord Marmion's steed rush'd by;
And Eustace, maddening at the sight,
A look and sign to Clara cast,
To mark he would return in haste,
Then plunged into the fight.

XXVIII.

Ask me not what the maiden feels,
Left in that dreadful hour alone:
Perchance her reason stoops, or reels;
Perchance a courage, not her own,
Braces her mind to desperate tone.—
The scatter'd van of England wheels;—
She only said, as loud in air
The tumult roar'd, "Is Wilton there?"—
They fly, or, madden'd by despair,
Fight but to die,—"Is Wilton there?"
With that, straight up the hill there rode
Two horsemen drench'd with gore,
And in their arms, a helpless load,
A wounded knight they bore.
His hand still strain'd the broken brand;
His arms were smear'd with blood and sand.
Dragg'd from among the horse's feet,
With dinted shield, and helmet beat,
The falcon-crest and plumage gone,
Can that be haughty Marmion! . . .
Young Blount his armour did unlace,
And, gazing on his ghastly face,
Said—"By Saint George, he's gone!
That spear-wound has our master sped,
And see the deep cut on his head!
Good night to Marmion."—
"Unnurtured Blount! thy brawling cease:
He opes his eyes," said Eustace; "peace!"

XXIX.

When, doff'd his casque, he felt free air,
Around 'gan Marmion wildly stare:—
"Where's Harry Blount? Fitz-Eustace
Linger ye here, ye hearts of hare! [where?
Redeem my pennon,—charge again!
Cry—'Marmion to the rescue!'—Vain!
Last of my race, on battle-plain
That shout shall ne'er be heard again!—
Yet my last thought is England's—fly,
To Dacre bear my signet-ring:
Tell him his squadrons up to bring.—
Fitz-Eustace, to Lord Surrey hie;
Tunstall lies dead upon the field,
His life-blood stains the spotless shield:
Edmund is down:—my life is reft;
The Admiral alone is left.
Let Stanley charge with spur of fire,—
With Chester charge, and Lancashire,
Full upon Scotland's central host,
Or victory and England's lost.—
Must I bid twice?—hence, varlets! fly!
Leave Marmion here alone—to die."
They parted, and alone he lay;
Clare drew her from the sight away,
Till pain wrung forth a lowly moan,
And half he murmur'd,—"Is there none,
Of all my halls have nurst,
Page, squire, or groom, one cup to bring
Of blessed water from the spring,
To slake my dying thirst!"

XXX.

O, woman! in our hours of ease,
Uncertain, coy, and hard to please,
And variable as the shade
By the light quivering aspen made;
When pain and anguish wring the brow,
A ministering angel thou!—
Scarce were the piteous accents said,
When, with the Baron's casque, the maid
To the nigh streamlet ran:
Forgot were hatred, wrongs, and fears;
The plaintive voice alone she hears,
Sees but the dying man.
She stoop'd her by the runnel's side,
But in abhorrence backward drew;
For, oozing from the mountain's side,
Where raged the war, a dark-red tide
Was curdling in the streamlet blue.
Where shall she turn?—behold her mark
A little fountain cell,
Where water, clear as diamond-spark,
In a stone basin fell.
Above, some half-worn letters say,
Drink. weary. pilgrim. drink. and. pray.
For. the. kind. soul. of. Sybil. Gray.
Who. built. this. cross. and. well.
She fill'd the helm, and back she hied,
And with surprise and joy espied
A monk supporting Marmion's head—
A pious man, whom duty brought
To dubious verge of battle fought,
To shrieve the dying, bless the dead.

XXXI.

Deep drank Lord Marmion of the wave,
And, as she stoop'd his brow to lave—

"Is it the hand of Clare," he said,
"Or injured Constance, bathes my head?"
Then, as remembrance rose,—
"Speak not to me of shrift or prayer!
I must redress her woes.
Short space, few words, are mine to spare;
Forgive and listen, gentle Clare!"—
"Alas!" she said, "the while,—
O, think of your immortal weal!
In vain for Constance is your zeal;
She——died at Holy Isle."—
Lord Marmion started from the ground,
As light as if he felt no wound;
Though in the action burst the tide,
In torrents, from his wounded side.
"Then it was truth," he said—"I knew
That the dark presage must be true.—
I would the Fiend, to whom belongs
The vengeance due to all her wrongs,
Would spare me but a day!
For wasting fire, and dying groan,
And priests slain on the altar-stone,
Might bribe him for delay.
It may not be!—this dizzy trance—
Curse on yon base marauder's lance,
And doubly cursed my failing brand!
A sinful heart makes feeble hand."
Then, fainting, down on earth he sunk,
Supported by the trembling Monk.

XXXII.

With fruitless labour, Clara bound,
And strove to stanch the gushing wound:
The Monk, with unavailing cares,
Exhausted all the Church's prayers.
Ever, he said, that, close and near,
A lady's voice was in his ear,
And that the priest he could not hear,
For that she ever sung,
"*In the lost battle, borne down by the flying,*
Where mingles war's rattle with groans of the dying!"
So the notes rung;—
"Avoid thee, Fiend!—with cruel hand,
Shake not the dying sinner's sand!—
O look, my son, upon yon sign
Of the Redeemer's grace divine;
O think on faith and bliss!—
By many a death-bed I have been,
And many a sinner's parting seen,
But never aught like this."—
The war, that for a space did fail,
Now trebly thundering swell'd the gale,
And—STANLEY! was the cry;—
A light on Marmion's visage spread,
And fired his glazing eye:
With dying hand, above his head,
He shook the fragment of his blade,
And shouted "Victory!—
Charge, Chester, charge! On, Stanley,
Were the last words of Marmion. [on!"

XXXIII.

By this, though deep the evening fell,
Still rose the battle's deadly swell,
For still the Scots, around their King,
Unbroken, fought in desperate ring.
Where's now their victor vanward wing,
Where Huntly, and where Home?—
O for a blast of that dread horn,
On Fontarabian echoes borne,
That to King Charles did come,
When Rowland brave, and Olivier,
And every paladin and peer,
On Roncesvalles died!
Such blast might warn them, not in vain,
To quit the plunder of the slain,
And turn the doubtful day again,
While yet on Flodden side,
Afar, the Royal Standard flies,
And round it toils, and bleeds, and dies,
Our Caledonian pride!
In vain the wish—for far away,
While spoil and havoc mark their way,
Near Sybil's Cross the plunderers stray.—
"O Lady," cried the Monk, "away!"
And placed her on her steed,
And led her to the chapel fair,
Of Tillmouth upon Tweed.
There all the night they spent in prayer,
And at the dawn of morning, there
She met her kinsman, Lord Fitz-Clare.

XXXIV.

But as they left the dark'ning heath,
More desperate grew the strife of death.
The English shafts in volleys hail'd,
In headlong charge their horse assail'd;
Front, flank, and rear, the squadrons sweep
To break the Scottish circle deep,
That fought around their King.
But yet, though thick the shafts as snow,
Though charging knights like whirlwinds go,
Though bill-men ply the ghastly blow,
Unbroken was the ring;
The stubborn spear-men still made good
Their dark impenetrable wood,
Each stepping where his comrade stood,
The instant that he fell.
No thought was there of dastard flight;
Link'd in the serried phalanx tight,
Groom fought like noble, squire like knight,
As fearlessly and well;
Till utter darkness closed her wing
O'er their thin host and wounded King.
Then skilful Surrey's sage commands
Led back from strife his shatter'd bands;
And from the charge they drew,
As mountain-waves, from wasted lands,
Sweep back to ocean blue.

Then did their loss his foemen know;
Their King, their Lords, their mightiest
They melted from the field, as snow, [low,
When streams are swoln and south winds
Dissolves in silent dew. [blow,
Tweed's echoes heard the ceaseless plash,
While many a broken band,
Disorder'd, through her currents dash,
To gain the Scottish land;
To town and tower, to down and dale,
To tell red Flodden's dismal tale,
And raise the universal wail.
Tradition, legend, tune, and song,
Shall many an age that wail prolong:
Still from the sire the son shall hear
Of the stern strife, and carnage drear,
Of Flodden's fatal field,
Where shiver'd was fair Scotland's spear,
And broken was her shield!

XXXV.

Day dawns upon the mountain's side:—
There, Scotland! lay thy bravest pride,
Chiefs, knights, and nobles, many a one:
The sad survivors all are gone.—
View not that corpse mistrustfully,
Defaced and mangled though it be;
Nor to yon Border castle high,
Look northward with upbraiding eye;
Nor cherish hope in vain,
That, journeying far on foreign strand,
The Royal Pilgrim to his land
May yet return again.
He saw the wreck his rashness wrought;
Reckless of life, he desperate fought,
And fell on Flodden plain:
And well in death his trusty brand,
Firm clench'd within his manly hand,
Beseem'd the Monarch slain.*
But, O! how changed since yon blithe
Gladly I turn me from the sight, [night!—
Unto my tale again.

XXXVI.

Short is my tale:—Fitz-Eustace' care
A pierced and mangled body bare
To moated Lichfield's lofty pile;
And there, beneath the southern aisle,
A tomb, with Gothic sculpture fair,
Did long Lord Marmion's image bear
(Now vainly for its sight you look;
'Twas levell'd when fanatic Brook
The fair cathedral storm'd and took;*
But, thanks to Heaven and good Saint
A guerdon meet the spoiler had). [Chad!
There erst was martial Marmion found,
His feet upon a couchant hound,
His hands to heaven upraised;
And all around, on scutcheon rich,
And tablet carved, and fretted niche,
His arms and feats were blazed.

And yet, though all was carved so fair,
And priest for Marmion breathed the
prayer,
The last Lord Marmion lay not there.
From Ettrick woods, a peasant swain
Follow'd his lord to Flodden plain,—
One of those flowers whom plaintive lay
In Scotland mourns as "wede away:"
Sore wounded, Sybil's Cross he spied,
And dragg'd him to its foot, and died,
Close by the noble Marmion's side.
The spoilers stripp'd and gash'd the slain,
And thus their corpses were mista'en;
And thus, in the proud Baron's tomb,
The lowly woodsman took the room.

XXXVII.

Less easy task it were, to show
Lord Marmion's nameless grave, and low.
They dug his grave e'en where he lay,
But every mark is gone;
Time's wasting hand has done away
The simple Cross of Sybil Gray,
And broke her font of stone:
But yet out from the little hill
Oozes the slender springlet still.
Oft halts the stranger there,
For thence may best his curious eye
The memorable field descry;
And shepherd boys repair
To seek the water-flag and rush,
And rest them by the hazel bush,
And plait their garlands fair;
Nor dream they sit upon the grave
That holds the bones of Marmion brave.—
When thou shalt find the little hill,
With thy heart commune, and be still.
If ever, in temptation strong,
Thou left'st the right path for the wrong;
If every devious step, thus trod,
Still led thee further from the road;
Dread thou to speak presumptuous doom
On noble Marmion's lowly tomb;
But say, "He died a gallant knight,
With sword in hand, for England's right."

XXXVIII.

I do not rhyme to that dull elf,
Who cannot image to himself,
That all through Flodden's dismal night,
Wilton was foremost in the fight;
That, when brave Surrey's steed was slain,
'Twas Wilton mounted him again;
'Twas Wilton's brand that deepest hew'd,
Amid the spearmen's stubborn wood:
Unnamed by Hollinshed or Hall,
He was the living soul of all;
That, after fight, his faith made plain,
He won his rank and lands again;
And charged his old paternal shield
With bearings won on Flodden Field.

Nor sing I to that simple maid,
To whom it must in terms be said,
That King and kinsmen did agree
To bless fair Clara's constancy;
Who cannot, unless I relate,
Paint to her mind the bridal's state;
That Wolsey's voice the blessing spoke,
More, Sands, and Denny pass'd the joke;
That bluff King Hal the curtain drew,
And Catherine's hand the stocking threw;
And afterwards, for many a day,
That it was held enough to say,
In blessing to a wedded pair,
"Love they like Wilton and like Clare!"

L'ENVOY.

TO THE READER.

WHY then a final note prolong,
Or lengthen out a closing song,
Unless to bid the gentles speed,
Who long have listed to my rede?
To Statesmen grave, if such may deign
To read the Minstrel's idle strain,
Sound head, clean hand, and piercing wit,
And patriotic heart—as PITT!
A garland for the hero's crest,
And twined by her he loves the best;
To every lovely lady bright,
What can I wish but faithful knight?
To every faithful lover too,
What can I wish but lady true?
And knowledge to the studious sage;
And pillow to the head of age.
To thee, dear school-boy, whom my lay
Has cheated of thy hour of play,
Light task, and merry holiday!
To all, to each, a fair good-night,
And pleasing dreams, and slumbers light!

THE

LADY OF THE LAKE:

A POEM IN SIX CANTOS.

TO THE MOST NOBLE

JOHN JAMES MARQUIS OF ABERCORN,

ETC. ETC. ETC.

THIS POEM IS INSCRIBED BY

THE AUTHOR.

INTRODUCTION TO EDITION 1830.

AFTER the success of "Marmion," I felt inclined to exclaim with Ulysses in the "Odyssey"—

"One venturous game my hand has won to-day—
Another, gallants, yet remains to play."

The ancient manners, the habits and customs, of the aboriginal race by whom the Highlands of Scotland were inhabited, had always appeared to me peculiarly adapted to poetry. The change in their manners, too, had taken place almost within my own time, or at least I had learned many particulars concerning the ancient state of the Highlands from the old men of the last generation. I had always thought the old Scottish Gael highly adapted for poetical composition. The feuds and political dissensions which, half-a-century earlier, would have rendered the richer and wealthier part of the kingdom indisposed to countenance a poem the scene of which was laid in the Highlands, were now sunk in the generous compassion which the English, more than any other nation, feel for the misfortunes of an honourable foe. The Poems of Ossian had, by their popularity, sufficiently shown, that if writings on Highland subjects were qualified to interest the reader, mere national prejudices were, in the present day, very unlikely to interfere with their success.

I had also read a great deal, seen much, and heard more, of that romantic country, where I was in the habit of spending some time every autumn; and the scenery of Loch Katrine was connected with the recollection of many a dear friend and merry expedition of former days. This poem, the action of which lay among scenes so beautiful, and so deeply imprinted on my recollection, was a labour of love, and it was no less so to recall the manners and incidents introduced. The frequent custom of James IV., and particularly of James V., to walk through their kingdom in disguise, afforded me the hint of an incident, which never fails to be interesting, if managed with the slightest address or dexterity.

I may now confess, however, that the employment, though attended with great pleasure, was not without its doubts and anxieties. A lady, to whom I was nearly related, and with whom I lived, during her whole life, on the most brotherly terms of affection, was residing with me at the time when the work was in progress, and used to ask me, what I could possibly do to rise

so early in the morning (that happening to be the most convenient time to me for composition). At last I told her the subject of my meditations; and I can never forget the anxiety and affection expressed in her reply. "Do not be so rash," she said, "my dearest cousin. You are already popular—more so, perhaps, than you yourself will believe, or than even I, or other partial friends, can fairly allow to your merit. You stand high—do not rashly attempt to climb higher, and incur the risk of a fall; for, depend upon it, a favourite will not be permitted even to stumble with impunity." I replied to this affectionate expostulation in the words of Montrose—

"He either fears his fate too much,
Or his deserts are small,
Who dares not put it to the touch
To gain or lose it all."

"If I fail," I said—for the dialogue is strong in my recollection—"it is a sign that I ought never to have succeeded, and I will write prose for life: you shall see no change in my temper, nor will I eat a single meal the worse. But if I succeed,

'Up with the bonnie blue bonnet,
The dirk, and the feather, and a'!'"

Afterwards I showed my affectionate and anxious critic the first canto of the poem, which reconciled her to my imprudence. Nevertheless, although I answered thus confidently, with the obstinacy often said to be proper to those who bear my surname, I acknowledge that my confidence was considerably shaken by the warning of her excellent taste and unbiassed friendship. Nor was I much comforted by her retraction of the unfavourable judgment, when I recollected how likely a natural partiality was to affect that change of opinion. In such cases, affection rises like a light on the canvas, improves any favourable tints which it formerly exhibited, and throws its defects into the shade.

I remember that about the same time a friend started in to "heeze up my hope," like the "sportsman with his cutty-gun," in the old song. He was bred a farmer, but a man of powerful understanding, natural good taste, and warm poetical feeling, perfectly competent to supply the wants of an imperfect or irregular education. He was a passionate admirer of field-sports, which we often pursued together.

As this friend happened to dine with me at Ashestiel one day, I took the opportunity of reading to him the first canto of "The Lady of the Lake," in order to ascertain the effect the poem was likely to produce upon a person who was but too favourable a representative of readers at large. It is, of course, to be supposed, that I determined rather to guide my opinion by what my friend might appear to feel, than by what he might think fit to say. His reception of my recitation, or prelection, was rather singular. He placed his hand across his brow, and listened with great attention through the whole account of the stag-hunt, till the dogs threw themselves into the lake to follow their master, who embarks with Ellen Douglas. He then started up with a sudden exclamation, struck his hand on the table, and declared, in a voice of censure calculated for the occasion, that the dogs must have been totally ruined by being permitted to take the water after such a severe chase. I own I was much encouraged by the species of reverie which had possessed so zealous a follower of the sports of the ancient Nimrod, who had been completely surprised out of all doubts of the reality of the tale. Another of his remarks gave me less pleasure. He detected the identity of the King with the wandering knight, Fitz-James, when he winds his bugle to summon his attendants. He was probably thinking of the lively, but somewhat licentious, old ballad, in which the dénouement of a royal intrigue takes place as follows:—

"He took a bugle frae his side,
He blew both loud and shrill,
And four-and-twenty belted knights
Came skipping ower the hill;
Then he took out a little knife,
Let a' his duddies fa',
And he was the brawest gentleman
That was amang them a'.
And we'll go no more a-roving," &c.†

This discovery, as Mr. Pepys says of the rent in his camlet cloak, was but a trifle, yet it troubled me: and I was at a good deal of pains to efface any marks by which I thought my secret could be traced before the conclusion, when I relied on it with the same hope of producing effect, with which the Irish post-boy is said to reserve a "trot for the avenue."

I took uncommon pains to verify the accuracy of the local circumstances of this story. I recollect, in particular, that to ascertain whether I was telling a probable tale, I went into Perthshire, to see whether King James could actually have ridden from the banks of Loch Vennachar to Stirling Castle within the time supposed in the Poem, and had the pleasure to satisfy myself that it was quite practicable.

After a considerable delay, "The Lady of the Lake" appeared in May, 1810; and its

† The Jolly Beggar, attributed to King James V.—*Herd's Collection*, 1776.

success was certainly so extraordinary as to induce me for the moment to conclude that I had at last fixed a nail in the proverbially inconstant wheel of Fortune, whose stability in behalf of an individual who had so boldly courted her favours for three successive times had not as yet been shaken. I had attained, perhaps, that degree of public reputation at which prudence, or certainly timidity, would have made a halt, and discontinued efforts by which I was far more likely to diminish my fame than to increase it. But, as the celebrated John Wilkes is said to have explained to his late Majesty, that he himself, amid his full tide of popularity, was never a Wilkite, so I can, with honest truth, exculpate myself from having been at any time a partisan of my own poetry, even when it was in the highest fashion with the million. It must not be supposed that I was either so ungrateful, or so superabundantly candid, as to despise or scorn the value of those whose voice had elevated me so much higher than my own opinion told me I deserved. I felt, on the contrary, the more grateful to the public, as receiving that from partiality to me which I could not have claimed from merit; and I endeavoured to deserve the partiality, by continuing such exertions as I was capable of for their amusement.

It may be that I did not, in this continued course of scribbling, consult either the interest of the public or my own. But the former had effectual means of defending themselves, and could, by their coldness, sufficiently check any approach to intrusion; and for myself, I had now for several years dedicated my hours so much to literary labour, that I should have felt difficulty in employing myself otherwise; and so, like Dogberry, I generously bestowed all my tediousness on the public, comforting myself with the reflection, that if posterity should think me undeserving of the favour with which I was regarded by my contemporaries, "they could not but say I *had* the crown," and had enjoyed for a time that popularity which is so much coveted.

I conceived, however, that I held the distinguished situation I had obtained, however unworthily, rather like the champion of pugilism,† on the condition of being always ready to show proofs of my skill, than in the manner of the champion of chivalry, who performs his duties only on rare and solemn occasions. I was in any case conscious that I could not long hold a situation which the caprice, rather than the judgment, of the public, had bestowed upon me, and preferred being deprived of my precedence by some more worthy rival, to sinking into contempt for my indolence, and losing my reputation by what Scottish lawyers call the *negative prescription*. Accordingly, those who choose to look at the Introduction to Rokeby, in the present edition, will be able to trace the steps by which I declined as a poet to figure as a novelist: as the ballad says, Queen Eleanor sunk at Charing-Cross to rise again at Queenhithe.

It only remains for me to say, that, during my short pre-eminence of popularity, I faithfully observed the rules of moderation which I had resolved to follow before I began my course as a man of letters. If a man is determined to make a noise in the world, he is as sure to encounter abuse and ridicule, as he who gallops furiously through a village must reckon on being followed by the curs in full cry. Experienced persons know, that in stretching to flog the latter, the rider is very apt to catch a bad fall; nor is an attempt to chastise a malignant critic attended with less danger to the author. On this principle, I let parody, burlesque, and squibs find their own level; and while the latter hissed most fiercely, I was cautious never to catch them up, as schoolboys do, to throw them back against the naughty boy who fired them off, wisely remembering that they are, in such cases, apt to explode in the handling. Let me add, that my reign (since Byron has so called it) was marked by some instances of good-nature as well as patience. I never refused a literary person of merit such services in smoothing his way to the public as were in my power: and I had the advantage, rather an uncommon one with our irritable race, to enjoy general favour, without incurring permanent ill-will, so far as is known to me, among any of my contemporaries.

W. S.

ABBOTSFORD, *April*, 1830.

Argument.

The Scene of the following Poem is laid chiefly in the Vicinity of Loch Katrine, in the Western Highlands of Perthshire. The time of Action includes Six Days, and the transactions of each Day occupy a Canto.

† "In twice five years the 'greatest living poet,'
Like to the champion in the fisty ring,
Is call'd on to support his claim, or show it,
Although 'tis an imaginary thing," &c.
Don Juan, canto xi. st. 55.

THE LADY OF THE LAKE.

CANTO FIRST.

THE CHASE.

HARP of the North! that mouldering long hast hung
On the witch-elm that shades Saint Fillan's spring,
And down the fitful breeze thy numbers flung,
Till envious ivy did around thee cling,
Muffling with verdant ringlet every string—
O Minstrel Harp, still must thine accents sleep?
Mid rustling leaves and fountains murmuring,
Still must thy sweeter sounds their silence keep,
Nor bid a warrior smile, nor teach a maid to weep?

Not thus, in ancient days of Caledon,
Was thy voice mute amid the festal crowd,
When lay of hopeless love, or glory won,
Aroused the fearful, or subdued the proud.
At each according pause, was heard aloud
Thine ardent symphony sublime and high!
Fair dames and crested chiefs attention bow'd;
For still the burden of thy minstrelsy
Was Knighthood's dauntless deed, and Beauty's matchless eye.

O wake once more! how rude soe'er the hand
That ventures o'er thy magic maze to stray;
O wake once more! though scarce my skill command
Some feeble echoing of thine earlier lay:
Though harsh and faint, and soon to die away,
And all unworthy of thy nobler strain,
Yet if one heart throb higher at its sway,
The wizard note has not been touch'd in vain.
Then silent be no more! Enchantress, wake again!

I.

The stag at eve had drunk his fill,
Where danced the moon on Monan's rill,
And deep his midnight lair had made
In lone Glenartney's hazel shade;
But, when the sun his beacon red
Had kindled on Benvoirlich's head,
The deep-mouth'd bloodhound's heavy bay
Resounded up the rocky way,
And faint, from farther distance borne,
Were heard the clanging hoof and horn.

II.

As Chief, who hears his warder call,
"To arms! the foemen storm the wall,"
The antler'd monarch of the waste
Sprung from his heathery couch in haste.
But, ere his fleet career he took,
The dew-drops from his flanks he shook;
Like crested leader proud and high,
Toss'd his beam'd frontlet to the sky;
A moment gazed adown the dale,
A moment snuff'd the tainted gale,
A moment listen'd to the cry,
That thicken'd as the chase drew nigh;
Then, as the headmost foes appear'd,
With one brave bound the copse he clear'd,
And, stretching forward free and far,
Sought the wild heaths of Uam-Var.

III.

Yell'd on the view the opening pack;
Rock, glen, and cavern paid them back;
To many a mingled sound at once
The awaken'd mountain gave response.
A hundred dogs bay'd deep and strong,
Clatter'd a hundred steeds along,
Their peal the merry horns rung out,
A hundred voices joined the shout;
With hark and whoop and wild halloo,
No rest Benvoirlich's echoes knew.
Far from the tumult fled the roe,
Close in her covert cower'd the doe;
The falcon, from her cairn on high,
Cast on the rout a wondering eye,
Till far beyond her piercing ken
The hurricane had swept the glen.
Faint, and more faint, its failing din
Return'd from cavern, cliff, and linn,
And silence settled, wide and still,
On the lone wood and mighty hill.

IV.

Less loud the sounds of sylvan war
Disturb'd the heights of Uam-Var,
And roused the cavern, where, 'tis told,
A giant made his den of old;*
For ere that steep ascent was won,
High in his pathway hung the sun,
And many a gallant, stay'd perforce,
Was fain to breathe his faltering horse,
And of the trackers of the deer,
Scarce half the lessening pack was near;
So shrewdly on the mountain side
Had the bold burst their mettle tried.

V.

The noble stag was pausing now
Upon the mountain's southern brow,
Where broad extended, far beneath,
The varied realms of fair Menteith.
With anxious eye he wandered o'er
Mountain and meadow, moss and moor,
And ponder'd refuge from his toil,
By far Lochard or Aberfoyle.
But nearer was the copsewood grey,
That waved and wept on Loch-Achray,
And mingled with the pine-trees blue
On the bold cliffs of Benvenue.
Fresh vigour with the hope return'd,
With flying foot the heath he spurn'd,
Held westward with unwearied race,
And left behind the panting chase.

VI.

'Twere long to tell what steeds gave o'er,
As swept the hunt through Cambus-more;
What reins were tighten'd in despair,
When rose Benledi's ridge in air;
Who flagg'd upon Bochastle's heath,
Who shunn'd to stem the flooded Teith,—
For twice that day, from shore to shore,
The gallant stag swam stoutly o'er.
Few were the stragglers, following far,
That reach'd the lake of Vennachar;
And when the Brigg of Turk was won,
The headmost horseman rode alone.

VII.

Alone, but with unbated zeal,
That horseman plied the scourge and steel;
For jaded now, and spent with toil,
Emboss'd with foam, and dark with soil,
While every gasp with sobs he drew,
The labouring stag strained full in view.
Two dogs of black Saint Hubert's breed,
Unmatch'd for courage, breath, and speed,*
Fast on his flying traces came,
And all but won that desperate game;
For, scarce a spear's length from his haunch,
Vindictive toiled the bloodhounds staunch;
Nor nearer might the dogs attain,
Nor farther might the quarry strain.
Thus up the margin of the lake,
Between the precipice and brake,
O'er stock and rock their race they take.

VIII.

The Hunter mark'd that mountain high,
The lone lake's western boundary,
And deem'd the stag must turn to bay,
Where that huge rampart barr'd the way;
Already glorying in the prize,
Measured his antlers with his eyes;
For the death-wound and death-halloo,
Muster'd his breath, his whin-yard drew;—*
But thundering as he came prepared,
With ready arm and weapon bared,
The wily quarry shunn'd the shock,
And turn'd him from the opposing rock;
Then, dashing down a darksome glen,
Soon lost to hound and Hunter's ken,
In the deep Trosach's wildest nook
His solitary refuge took.
There, while close couch'd, the thicket shed
Cold dews and wild-flowers on his head,
He heard the baffled dogs in vain
Rave through the hollow pass amain,
Chiding the rocks that yell'd again.

IX.

Close on the hounds the Hunter came,
To cheer them on the vanish'd game;
But, stumbling in the rugged dell,
The gallant horse exhausted fell.
The impatient rider strove in vain
To rouse him with the spur and rein,
For the good steed, his labours o'er,
Stretch'd his stiff limbs, to rise no more;
Then, touch'd with pity and remorse,
He sorrow'd o'er the expiring horse.
"I little thought, when first thy rein
I slack'd upon the banks of Seine,
That Highland eagle e'er should feed
On thy fleet limbs, my matchless steed!
Woe worth the chase, woe worth the day,
That costs thy life, my gallant grey!"

X.

Then through the dell his horn resounds,
From vain pursuit to call the hounds.
Back limp'd, with slow and crippled pace,
The sulky leaders of the chase;
Close to their master's side they press'd,
With drooping tail and humbled crest;
But still the dingle's hollow throat
Prolong'd the swelling bugle-note.
The owlets started from their dream,
The eagles answer'd with their scream,
Round and around the sounds were cast,
Till echo seem'd an answering blast;
And on the Hunter hied his way,
To join some comrades of the day;

* An asterisk in these pages signifies that a note upon the passage is to be found at the end of the volume.

Yet often paused, so strange the road,
So wondrous were the scenes it show'd.

XI.

The western waves of ebbing day
Roll'd o'er the glen their level way;
Each purple peak, each flinty spire,
Was bathed in floods of living fire.
But not a setting beam could glow
Within the dark ravines below,
Where twined the path in shadow hid,
Round many a rocky pyramid,
Shooting abruptly from the dell
Its thunder-splinter'd pinnacle;
Round many an insulated mass,
The native bulwarks of the pass,
Huge as the tower which builders vain
Presumptuous piled on Shinar's plain.
The rocky summits, split and rent,
Form'd turret, dome, or battlement,
Or seem'd fantastically set
With cupola or minaret,
Wild crests as pagod ever deck'd,
Or mosque of Eastern architect.
Nor were these earth-born castles bare,
Nor lack'd they many a banner fair;
For, from their shiver'd brows display'd,
Far o'er the unfathomable glade,
All twinkling with the dewdrops sheen,
The briar-rose fell in streamers green,
And creeping shrubs, of thousand dyes,
Waved in the west-wind's summer sighs.

XII.

Boon nature scatter'd, free and wild,
Each plant or flower, the mountain's child.
Here eglantine embalm'd the air,
Hawthorn and hazel mingled there;
The primrose pale, and violet flower,
Found in each cliff a narrow bower;
Fox-glove and night-shade, side by side,
Emblems of punishment and pride,
Group'd their dark hues with every stain
The weather-beaten crags retain.
With boughs that quaked at every breath,
Grey birch and aspen wept beneath;
Aloft, the ash and warrior oak
Cast anchor in the rifted rock;
And, higher yet, the pine-tree hung
His shatter'd trunk, and frequent flung,
Where seem'd the cliffs to meet on high,
His boughs athwart the narrow'd sky.
Highest of all, where white peaks glanced,
Where glist'ning streamers waved and danced,
The wanderer's eye could barely view
The summer heaven's delicious blue;
So wondrous wild, the whole might seem
The scenery of a fairy dream.

XIII.

Onward, amid the copse 'gan peep
A narrow inlet, still and deep,
Affording scarce such breadth of brim,
As served the wild duck's brood to swim.
Lost for a space, through thickets veering,
But broader when again appearing,
Tall rocks and tufted knolls their face
Could on the dark-blue mirror trace;
And farther as the Hunter stray'd,
Still broader sweep its channels made.
The shaggy mounds no longer stood,
Emerging from entangled wood,
But, wave-encircled, seem'd to float,
Like castle girdled with its moat;
Yet broader floods extending still
Divide them from their parent hill,
Till each, retiring, claims to be
An islet in a inland sea.

XIV.

And now, to issue from the glen,
No pathway meets the wanderer's ken,
Unless he climb, with footing nice,
A far projecting precipice.*
The broom's tough roots his ladder made,
The hazel saplings lent their aid;
And thus an airy point he won,
Where, gleaming with the setting sun,
One burnish'd sheet of living gold,
Loch Katrine lay beneath him roll'd,†
In all her length far winding lay,
With promontory, creek, and bay,
And islands that, empurpled bright,
Floated amid the livelier light,
And mountains, that like giants stand,
To sentinel enchanted land.
High on the south, huge Benvenue‡
Down on the lake in masses threw
Crags, knolls, and mounds, confusedly hurl'd,
The fragments of an earlier world;
A wildering forest feather'd o'er
His ruin'd sides and summit hoar,
While on the north, through middle air,
Ben-an heaved high his forehead bare.

XV.

From the steep promontory gazed
The stranger, raptured and amazed.
And, "What a scene were here," he cried,
"For princely pomp, or churchman's pride!
On this bold brow, a lordly tower;
In that soft vale, a lady's bower;
On yonder meadow, far away,
The turrets of a cloister grey;
How blithely might the bugle-horn
Chide, on the lake, the lingering morn!

† Loch-Ketturin is the Celtic pronunciation. In his notes to *The Fair Maid of Perth*, the author has signified his belief that the lake was named after the *Catterins*, or wild robbers, who haunted its shores.

‡ *Benvenue* is literally the little mountain—*i.e.*, as contrasted with Benledi and Benlomond.

How sweet, at eve, the lover's lute
Chime, when the groves were still and mute!
And, when the midnight moon should lave
Her forehead in the silver wave,
How solemn on the ear would come
The holy matins' distant hum,
While the deep peal's commanding tone
Should wake, in yonder islet lone,
A sainted hermit from his cell,
To drop a bead with every knell—
And bugle, lute, and bell, and all,
Should each bewilder'd stranger call
To friendly feast, and lighted hall.

XVI.

"Blithe were it then to wander here!
But now,—beshrew yon nimble deer,—
Like that same hermit's, thin and spare,
The copse must give my evening fare;
Some mossy bank my couch must be,
Some rustling oak my canopy.
Yet pass we that; the war and chase
Give little choice of resting-place;—
A summer night, in greenwood spent,
Were but to-morrow's merriment:
But hosts may in these wilds abound,
Such as are better miss'd than found;
To meet with Highland plunderers here,
Were worse than loss of steed or deer.—*
I am alone;—my bugle strain
May call some straggler of the train;
Or, fall the worst that may betide,
Ere now this falchion has been tried."

XVII.

But scarce again his horn he wound,
When lo! forth starting at the sound,
From underneath an aged oak,
That slanted from the islet rock,
A damsel guider of its way,
A little skiff shot to the bay,
That round the promontory steep
Led its deep line in graceful sweep,
Eddying, in almost viewless wave,
The weeping willow twig to lave,
And kiss, with whispering sound and slow,
The beach of pebbles bright as snow.
The boat had touch'd this silver strand,
Just as the Hunter left his stand,
And stood conceal'd amid the brake,
To view this Lady of the Lake.
The maiden paused, as if again
She thought to catch the distant strain.
With head up-raised, and look intent,
And eye and ear attentive bent,
And locks flung back, and lips apart,
Like monument of Grecian art,
In listening mood, she seem'd to stand,
The guardian Naiad of the strand.

XVIII.

And ne'er did Grecian chisel trace
A Nymph, a Naiad, or a Grace,
Of finer form, or lovelier face!
What though the sun, with ardent frown,
Had slightly tinged her cheek with brown,—
The sportive toil, which, short and light,
Had dyed her glowing hue so bright,
Served too in hastier swell to show
Short glimpses of a breast of snow:
What though no rule of courtly grace
To measured mood had train'd her pace,—
A foot more light, a step more true,
Ne'er from the heath-flower dash'd the dew;
E'en the slight harebell raised its head,
Elastic from her airy tread:
What though upon her speech there hung
The accents of the mountain tongue,—
Those silver sounds, so soft, so dear,
The listener held his breath to hear!

XIX.

A chieftain's daughter seem'd the maid;
Her satin snood,† her silken plaid,
Her golden brooch, such birth betray'd.
And seldom was a snood amid
Such wild luxuriant ringlets hid,
Whose glossy black to shame might bring
The plumage of the raven's wing;
And seldom o'er a breast so fair
Mantled a plaid with modest care,
And never brooch the folds combined
Above a heart more good and kind.
Her kindness and her worth to spy,
You need but gaze on Ellen's eye;
Not Katrine, in her mirror blue,
Gives back the shaggy banks more true,
Than every free-born glance confess'd
The guileless movements of her breast;
Whether joy danced in her dark eye,
Or woe or pity claim'd a sigh,
Or filial love was glowing there,
Or meek devotion pour'd a prayer,
Or tale of injury call'd forth
The indignant spirit of the North.
One only passion unreveal'd,
With maiden pride the maid conceal'd,
Yet not less purely felt the flame;—
O! need I tell that passion's name?

XX.

Impatient of the silent horn,
Now on the gale her voice was borne:—
"Father!" she cried; the rocks around
Loved to prolong the gentle sound.
Awhile she paused, no answer came,—
"Malcolm, was thine the blast?" the name

† See Note on Canto III., Stanza v.

Less resolutely uttered fell,
The echoes could not catch the swell.
"A stranger I," the Huntsman said,
Advancing from the hazel shade.
The maid, alarm'd, with hasty oar,
Push'd her light shallop from the shore,
And when a space was gain'd between,
Closer she drew her bosom's screen
(So forth the startled swan would swing,
So turn to prune his ruffled wing).
Then safe, though flutter'd and amazed,
She paused, and on the stranger gazed.
Not his the form, nor his the eye,
That youthful maidens wont to fly.

XXI.

On his bold visage middle age
Had slightly press'd its signet sage,
Yet had not quench'd the open truth
And fiery vehemence of youth;
Forward and frolic glee was there,
The will to do, the soul to dare,
The sparkling glance, soon blown to fire,
Of hasty love, or headlong ire.
His limbs were cast in manly mould,
For hardy sports or contest bold;
And though in peaceful garb array'd,
And weaponless, except his blade,
His stately mien as well implied
A high-born heart, a martial pride,
As if a Baron's crest he wore,
And sheathed in armour trode the shore.
Slighting the petty need he show'd,
He told of his benighted road;
His ready speech flow'd fair and free,
In phrase of gentlest courtesy;
Yet seem'd that tone, and gesture bland,
Less used to sue than to command.

XXII.

A while the maid the stranger eyed,
And, reassured, at length replied,
That Highland halls were open still
To wilder'd wanderers of the hill.
"Nor think you unexpected come
To yon lone isle, our desert home;
Before the heath had lost the dew,
This morn, a couch was pull'd for you;
On yonder mountain's purple head
Have ptarmigan and heath-cock bled,
And our broad nets have swept the mere,
To furnish forth your evening cheer."—
"Now, by the rood, my lovely maid,
Your courtesy has err'd," he said;
"No right have I to claim, misplaced,
The welcome of expected guest,
A wanderer, here by fortune tost,
My way, my friends, my course lost,
I ne'er before, believe me, fair,
Have ever drawn your mountain air,
Till on this lake's romantic strand,
I found a fay in fairy land!"

XXIII.

"I well believe," the maid replied,
As her light skiff approach'd the side,—
"I well believe, that ne'er before
Your foot has trod Loch Katrine's shore:
But yet, as far as yesternight,
Old Allan-Bane foretold your plight,—
A grey-hair'd sire, whose eye intent
Was on the vision'd future bent.*
He saw your steed, a dappled grey,
Lie dead beneath the birchen way;
Painted exact your form and mien,
Your hunting suit of Lincoln green,
That tassell'd horn so gaily gilt,
That falchion's crookèd blade and hilt,
That cap with heron plumage trim,
And yon two hounds so dark and grim.
He bade that all should ready be,
To grace a guest of fair degree;
But light I held his prophecy,
And deem'd it was my father's horn,
Whose echoes o'er the lake were borne."

XXIV.

The stranger smiled:—"Since to your home
A destined errant-knight I come,
Announced by prophet sooth and old,
Doom'd, doubtless, for achievement bold,
I'll lightly front each high emprise,
For one kind glance of those bright eyes.
Permit me, first, the task to guide
Your fairy frigate o'er the tide."
The maid, with smile suppress'd and sly,
The toil unwonted saw him try;
For seldom sure, if e'er before,
His noble hand had grasp'd an oar:
Yet with main strength his strokes he drew,
And o'er the lake the shallop flew;
With heads erect, and whimpering cry,
The hounds behind their passage ply.
Nor frequent does the bright oar break
The dark'ning mirror of the lake,
Until the rocky isle they reach,
And moor their shallop on the beach.

XXV.

The stranger view'd the shore around;
'Twas all so close with copsewood bound,
Nor track nor pathway might declare
That human foot frequented there,
Until the mountain-maiden show'd
A clambering unsuspected road,
That winded through the tangled screen,
And open'd on a narrow green,
Where weeping birch and willow round
With their long fibres swept the ground.
Here, for retreat in dangerous hour,
Some chief had framed a rustic bower.*

XXVI.

It was a lodge of ample size,
But strange of structure and device;

Of such materials, as around
The workman's hand had readiest found.
Lopp'd off their boughs, their hoar trunks bared,
And by the hatchet rudely squared,
To give the walls their destined height,
The sturdy oak and ash unite;
While moss and clay and leaves combined
To fence each crevice from the wind.
The lighter pine-trees, overhead,
Their slender length for rafters spread,
And wither'd heath and rushes dry
Supplied a russet canopy.
Due westward, fronting to the green,
A rural portico was seen,
Aloft on native pillars borne,
Of mountain fir with bark unshorn,
Where Ellen's hand had taught to twine
The ivy and Idæan vine,
The clematis, the favour'd flower
Which boasts the name of virgin-bower,
And every hardy plant could bear
Loch Katrine's keen and searching air.
An instant in this porch she staid,
And gaily to the stranger said,
"On heaven and on thy lady call,
And enter the enchanted hall!"

XXVII.

"My hope, my heaven, my trust must be,
My gentle guide, in following thee."
He cross'd the threshold—and a clang
Of angry steel that instant rang.
To his bold brow his spirit rush'd,
But soon for vain alarm he blush'd,
When on the floor he saw display'd,
Cause of the din, a naked blade
Dropp'd from the sheath, that, careless flung,
Upon a stag's huge antlers swung;
For all around, the walls to grace,
Huge trophies of the fight or chase:
A target there, a bugle here,
A battle-axe, a hunting-spear,
And broadswords, bows, and arrows store,
With the tusk'd trophies of the boar.
Here grins the wolf as when he died,
And there the wild-cat's brindled hide
The frontlet of the elk adorns,
Or mantles o'er the bison's horns;
Pennons and flags defaced and stain'd,
That blackening streaks of blood retain'd,
And deer-skins, dappled, dun, and white,
With otter's fur and seal's unite,
In rude and uncouth tapestry all,
To garnish forth the sylvan hall.

XXVIII.

The wondering stranger round him gazed,
And next the fallen weapon raised:—
Few were the arms whose sinewy strength
Sufficed to stretch it forth at length,
And as the brand he poised and sway'd,
"I never knew but one," he said,
"Whose stalwart arm might brook to wield
A blade like this in battle-field."
She sigh'd, then smiled and took the word:
"You see the guardian champion's sword;
As light it trembles in his hand,
As in my grasp a hazel wand;
My sire's tall form might grace the part
Of Ferragus or Ascabart;*
But in the absent giant's hold
Are women now, and menials old."

XXIX.

The mistress of the mansion came,
Mature of age, a graceful dame;
Whose easy step and stately port
Had well become a princely court,
To whom, though more than kindred
Young Ellen gave a mother's due. [knew,
Meet welcome to her guest she made,
And every courteous rite was paid,
That hospitality could claim,
Though all unasked his birth and name.*
Such then the reverence to a guest,
That fellest foe might join the feast,
And from his deadliest foeman's door
Unquestion'd turn, the banquet o'er.
At length his rank the stranger names,
"The Knight of Snowdoun, James Fitz-James;
Lord of a barren heritage,
Which his brave sires, from age to age,
By their good swords had held with toil;
His sire had fall'n in such turmoil,
And he, God wot, was forced to stand
Oft for his right with blade in hand.
This morning, with Lord Moray's train,
He chased a stalwart stag in vain,
Outstripp'd his comrades, miss'd the deer,
Lost his good steed, and wandered here."

XXX.

Fain would the Knight in turn require
The name and state of Ellen's sire.
Well show'd the elder lady's mien,
That courts and cities she had seen;
Ellen, though more her looks display'd
The simple grace of sylvan maid,
In speech and gesture, form and face,
Show'd she was come of gentle race.
'Twere strange in ruder rank to find
Such looks, such manners, and such mind.
Each hint the Knight of Snowdoun gave,
Dame Margaret heard with silence grave;
Or Ellen, innocently gay,
Turn'd all enquiry light away:—
"Weird women we! by dale and down
We dwell, afar from tower and town.
We stem the flood, we ride the blast,
On wandering knights our spells we cast;
While viewless minstrels touch the string,
'Tis thus our charmèd rhymes we sing."

She sung, and still a harp unseen
Fill'd up the symphony between.

XXXI.

SONG.

"Soldier, rest! thy warfare o'er,
Sleep the sleep that knows not breaking;
Dream of battled fields no more,
Days of danger, nights of waking.
In our isle's enchanted hall,
Hands unseen thy couch are strewing,
Fairy strains of music fall,
Every sense in slumber dewing.
Soldier, rest! thy warfare o'er,
Dream of fighting fields no more:
Sleep the sleep that knows not breaking,
Morn of toil, nor night of waking.

"No rude sound shall reach thine ear,
Armour's clang, or war-steed champing,
Trump nor pibroch summon here
Mustering clan, or squadron tramping.
Yet the lark's shrill fife may come
At the day-break from the fallow,
And the bittern sound his drum,
Booming from the sedgy shallow.
Ruder sounds shall none be near,
Guards nor warders challenge here,
Here's no war-steed's neigh and champing,
Shouting clans, or squadrons stamping."

XXXII.

She paused—then, blushing, led the lay
To grace the stranger of the day.
Her mellow notes awhile prolong
The cadence of the flowing song,
Till to her lips in measured frame
The minstrel verse spontaneous came.

SONG CONTINUED.

"Huntsman, rest! thy chase is done;
While our slumbrous spells assail ye,
Dream not, with the rising sun,
Bugles here shall sound reveillé.
Sleep! the deer is in his den;
Sleep! thy hounds are by thee lying;
Sleep! nor dream in yonder glen,
How thy gallant steed lay dying.
Huntsman, rest! thy chase is done,
Think not of the rising sun,
For at dawning to assail ye,
Here no bugles sound reveillé."

XXXIII.

The hall was clear'd—the stranger's bed
Was there of mountain heather spread,
Where oft a hundred guests had lain,
And dream'd their forest sports again.
But vainly did the heath-flower shed
Its moorland fragrance round his head;
Not Ellen's spell had lull'd to rest
The fever of his troubled breast.
In broken dreams the image rose
Of varied perils, pains, and woes:
His steed now flounders in the brake,
Now sinks his barge upon the lake;
Now leader of a broken host,
His standard falls, his honour's lost.
Then,—from mycouch may heavenly might
Chase that worst phantom of the night!—
Again return'd the scenes of youth,
Of confident, undoubting truth;
Again his soul he interchanged [estranged.
With friends whose hearts were long
They come, in dim procession led,
The cold, the faithless, and the dead;
As warm each hand, each brow as gay,
As if they parted yesterday.
And doubt distracts him at the view—
O were his senses false or true?
Dream'd he of death, or broken vow,
Or is it all a vision now?

XXXIV.

At length, with Ellen in a grove
He seem'd to walk, and speak of love;
She listen'd with a blush and sigh,
His suit was warm, his hopes were high.
He sought her yielded hand to clasp,
And a cold gauntlet met his grasp;
The phantom's sex was changed and gone,
Upon its head a helmet shone;
Slowly enlarged to giant size,
With darken'd cheek and threatening eyes,
The grisly visage, stern and hoar,
To Ellen still a likeness bore.—
He woke, and, panting with affright,
Recall'd the vision of the night.
The hearth's decaying brands were red,
And deep and dusky lustre shed,
Half showing, half concealing, all
The uncouth trophies of the hall.
'Mid those the stranger fix'd his eye,
Where that huge falchion hung on high,
And thoughts on thoughts, a countless throng,
Rush'd, chasing countless thoughts along,
Until, the giddy whirl to cure,
He rose, and sought the moonshine pure.

XXXV.

The wild rose, eglantine, and broom,
Wafted around their rich perfume:
The birch-trees wept in fragrant balm,
The aspens slept beneath the calm;
The silver light, with quivering glance,
Play'd on the water's still expanse,—
Wild were the heart whose passions' sway
Could rage beneath the sober ray!
He felt its calm, that warrior guest,
While thus he communed with his breast:—
"Why is it, at each turn I trace
Some memory of that exiled race?

Can I not mountain-maiden spy,
But she must bear the Douglas eye?
Can I not view a Highland brand,
But it must match the Douglas hand?
Can I not frame a fever'd dream,
But still the Douglas is the theme?
I 'll dream no more—by manly mind
Not even in sleep is will resign'd.
My midnight orisons said o'er,
I 'll turn to rest, and dream no more."
His midnight orisons he told,
A prayer with every bead of gold,
Consign'd to heaven his cares and woes,
And sunk in undisturb'd repose;
Until the heath-cock shrilly crew,
And morning dawn'd on Benvenue.

CANTO SECOND.

THE ISLAND.

I.

At morn the black-cock trims his jetty wing,
'Tis morning prompts the linnet's blithest lay,
All Nature's children feel the matin spring
Of life reviving, with reviving day;
And while yon little bark glides down the bay,
Wafting the stranger on his way again,
Morn's genial influence roused a minstrel grey,
And sweetly o'er the lake was heard thy strain,
Mix'd with the sounding harp, O white-hair'd Allan-Bane!*

II.

SONG.

"Not faster yonder rowers' might
Flings from their oars the spray,
Not faster yonder rippling bright,
That tracks the shallop's course in light,
Melts in the lake away,
Than men from memory erase
The benefits of former days;
Then, stranger, go! good speed the while,
Nor think again of the lonely isle.

"High place to thee in royal court,
High place in battle line,
Good hawk and hound for sylvan sport,
Where beauty sees the brave resort,
The honour'd meed be thine!
True be thy sword, thy friend sincere,
Thy lady constant, kind, and dear,
And lost in love and friendship's smile
Be memory of the lonely isle.

III.

SONG CONTINUED.

"But if beneath yon southern sky
A plaided stranger roam,
Whose drooping crest and stifled sigh,
And sunken cheek and heavy eye,
Pine for his Highland home;
Then, warrior, then be thine to show
The care that soothes a wanderer's woe;
Remember then thy hap ere while,
A stranger in the lonely isle.

"Or if on life's uncertain main
Mishap shall mar thy sail;
If faithful, wise, and brave in vain,
Woe, want, and exile thou sustain
Beneath the fickle gale;
Waste not a sigh on fortune changed,
On thankless courts, or friends estranged,
But come where kindred worth shall smile,
To greet thee in the lonely isle."

IV.

As died the sounds upon the tide,
The shallop reach'd the mainland side,
And ere his onward way he took,
The stranger cast a lingering look,
Where easily his eye might reach
The Harper on the islet beach,
Reclined against a blighted tree,
As wasted, grey, and worn as he.
To minstrel meditation given,
His reverend brow was raised to heaven,
As from the rising sun to claim
A sparkle of inspiring flame.
His hand, reclined upon the wire,
Seem'd watching the awakening fire;
So still he sate, as those who wait
Till judgment speak the doom of fate;
So still, as if no breeze might dare
To lift one lock of hoary hair;
So still, as life itself were fled,
In the last sound his harp had sped.

V.

Upon a rock with lichens wild,
Beside him Ellen sate and smiled.—
Smiled she to see the stately drake
Lead forth his fleet upon the lake,
While her vex'd spaniel, from the beach,
Bay'd at the prize beyond his reach?
Yet tell me, then, the maid who knows,
Why deepen'd on her cheek the rose?—
Forgive, forgive, Fidelity!
Perchance the maiden smiled to see
Yon parting lingerer wave adieu,
And stop and turn to wave anew;
And, lovely ladies, ere your ire
Condemn the heroine of my lyre,
Show me the fair would scorn to spy,
And prize such conquest of her eye!

VI.

While yet he loiter'd on the spot,
It seem'd as Ellen mark'd him not;
But when he turn'd him to the glade,
One courteous parting sign she made;

And after, oft the Knight would say,
That not when prize of festal day
Was dealt him by the brightest fair
Who e'er wore jewel in her hair,
So highly did his bosom swell,
As at that simple mute farewell.
Now with a trusty mountain-guide,
And his dark stag-hounds by his side,
He parts—the maid, unconscious still,
Watch'd him wind slowly round the hill;
But when his stately form was hid,
The guardian in her bosom chid—
"Thy Malcolm! vain and selfish maid!"
'Twas thus upbraiding conscience said,—
"Not so had Malcolm idly hung
On the smooth phrase of southern tongue;
Not so had Malcolm strain'd his eye,
Another step than thine to spy.—
Wake, Allan-Bane," aloud she cried,
To the old Minstrel by her side,—
"Arouse thee from thy moody dream!
I'll give thy harp heroic theme,
And warm thee with a noble name;
Pour forth the glory of the Græme!"*
Scarce from her lip the word had rush'd,
When deep the conscious maiden blush'd;
For of his clan, in hall and bower, [flower.
Young Malcolm Græme was held the

VII.

The Minstrel waked his harp—three times
Arose the well-known martial chimes,
And thrice their high heroic pride
In melancholy murmurs died.
"Vainly thou bid'st, O noble maid,"
Clasping his wither'd hands, he said,
"Vainly thou bid'st me wake the strain,
Though all unwont to bid in vain.
Alas! than mine a mightier hand
Has tuned my harp, my strings has spann'd!
I touch the chords of joy, but low
And mournful answer notes of woe;
And the proud march, which victors tread,
Sinks in the wailing for the dead.
O well for me, if mine alone
That dirge's deep prophetic tone!
If, as my tuneful fathers said, [sway'd,*
This harp, which erst Saint Modan
Can thus its master's fate foretell,
Then welcome be the minstrel's knell!

VIII.

"But ah! dear lady, thus it sigh'd
The eve thy sainted mother died;
And such the sounds which, while I strove
To wake a lay of war or love,
Came marring all the festal mirth,
Appalling me who gave them birth,
And, disobedient to my call,
Wail'd loud through Bothwell's banner'd
hall,
Ere Douglasses, to ruin driven,*
Were exiled from their native heaven.—
Oh! if yet worse mishap and woe
My master's house must undergo,
Or aught but weal to Ellen fair
Brood in these accents of despair,
No future bard, sad Harp! shall fling
Triumph or rapture from thy string;
One short, one final strain shall flow,
Fraught with unutterable woe,
Then shiver'd shall thy fragments lie,
Thy master cast him down and die!"

IX.

Soothing she answer'd him—"Assuage,
Mine honour'd friend, the fears of age;
All melodies to thee are known,
That harp has rung, or pipe has blown,
In Lowland vale or Highland glen,
From Tweed to Spey—what marvel, then,
At times, unbidden notes should rise,
Confusedly bound in memory's ties,
Entangling, as they rush along,
The war-march with the funeral song?—
Small ground is now for boding fear;
Obscure, but safe, we rest us here.
My sire, in native virtue great,
Resigning lordship, lands, and state,
Not then to fortune more resign'd,
Than yonder oak might give the wind;
The graceful foliage storms may reave,
The noble stem they cannot grieve.
For me,"—she stoop'd, and, looking round,
Pluck'd a blue harebell from the ground,—
"For me, whose memory scarce conveys
An image of more splendid days,
This little flower, that loves the lea,
May well my simple emblem be;
It drinks heaven's dew as blithe as rose
That in the King's own garden grows;
And when I place it in my hair,
Allan, a bard, is bound to swear
He ne'er saw coronet so fair."
Then playfully the chaplet wild
She wreath'd in her dark locks, and smiled.

X.

Her smile, her speech, with winning sway,
Wiled the old harper's mood away.
With such a look as hermits throw,
When angels stoop to soothe their woe,
He gazed, till fond regret and pride
Thrill'd to a tear, then thus replied:
"Loveliest and best! thou little know'st
The rank, the honours, thou hast lost!
O might I live to see thee grace,
In Scotland's court, thy birth-right place,
To see my favourite's step advance,
The lightest in the courtly dance,
The cause of every gallant's sigh,
And leading star of every eye,

And theme of every minstrel's art,
The Lady of the Bleeding Heart!" †

XI.

"Fair dreams are these," the maiden cried
(Light was her accent, yet she sighed);
"Yet is this mossy rock to me
Worth splendid chair and canopy;
Nor would my footsteps spring more gay
In courtly dance than blithe strathspey,
Nor half so pleased mine ear incline,
To royal minstrel's lay as thine.
And then for suitors proud and high,
To bend before my conquering eye,—
Thou, flattering bard! thyself wilt say,
That grim Sir Roderick owns its sway.
The Saxon scourge, Clan-Alpine's pride,
The terror of Loch Lomond's side,
Would, at my suit, thou know'st, delay
A Lennox foray—for a day."—

XII.

The ancient bard his glee repress'd:
"Ill hast thou chosen theme for jest!
For who, through all this western wild,
Named Black Sir Roderick e'er, and smiled!
In Holy-Rood a knight he slew;*
I saw, when back the dirk he drew,
Courtiers give place before the stride
Of the undaunted homicide;
And since, though outlaw'd, hath his hand
Full sternly kept his mountain land.
Who else dared give—ah! woe the day,
That I such hated truth should say—
The Douglas, like a stricken deer,
Disown'd by every noble peer,*
Even the rude refuge we have here?
Alas, this wild marauding Chief
Alone might hazard our relief,
And now thy maiden charms expand,
Looks for his guerdon in thy hand;
Full soon may dispensation sought,
To back his suit, from Rome be brought.
Then, though an exile on the hill,
Thy father, as the Douglas, still
Be held in reverence and fear;
And though to Roderick thou'rt so dear,
That thou might'st guide with silken thread,
Slave of thy will, this chieftain dread;
Yet, O loved maid, thy mirth refrain!
Thy hand is on a lion's mane."—

XIII.

"Minstrel," the maid replied, and high
Her father's soul glanced from her eye,
"My debts to Roderick's house I know:
All that a mother could bestow,
To Lady Margaret's care I owe,
Since first an orphan in the wild
She sorrow'd o'er her sister's child;
To her brave chieftain son, from ire
Of Scotland's king who shrouds my sire,
A deeper, holier debt is owed;
And, could I pay it with my blood,
Allan! Sir Roderick should command
My blood, my life,—but not my hand.
Rather will Ellen Douglas dwell
A votaress in Maronnan's cell;*
Rather through realms beyond the sea,
Seeking the world's cold charity,
Where ne'er was spoke a Scottish word,
And ne'er the name of Douglas heard,
An outcast pilgrim will she rove,
Than wed the man she cannot love.

XIV.

"Thou shak'st, good friend, thy tresses grey,—
That pleading look, what can it say
But what I own?—I grant him brave,
But wild as Bracklinn's thundering wave;*
And generous—save vindictive mood,
Or jealous transport, chafe his blood:
I grant him true to friendly band,
As his claymore is to his hand;
But O! that very blade of steel
More mercy for a foe would feel:
I grant him liberal, to fling
Among his clan the wealth they bring,
When back by lake and glen they wind,
And in the Lowland leave behind,
Where once some pleasant hamlet stood,
A mass of ashes slaked with blood.
The hand that for my father fought,
I honour, as his daughter ought;
But can I clasp it reeking red
From peasants slaughter'd in their shed?
No! wildly while his virtues gleam,
They make his passions darker seem,
And flash along his spirit high,
Like lightning o'er the midnight sky.
While yet a child,—and children know,
Instinctive taught, the friend and foe,—
I shudder'd at his brow of gloom,
His shadowy plaid, and sable plume;
A maiden grown, I ill could bear
His haughty mien and lordly air:
But, if thou join'st a suitor's claim,
In serious mood, to Roderick's name,
I thrill with anguish! or, if e'er
A Douglas knew the word, with fear.
To change such odious theme were best,—
What think'st thou of our stranger guest?"—

XV.

"What think I of him?—woe the while
That brought such wanderer to our isle!
Thy father's battle-brand, of yore
For Tine-man forged by fairy lore,*

† The well-known cognizance of the Douglas family.

What time he leagued, no longer foes,
His Border spears with Hotspur's bows,
Did, self-unscabbarded, foreshow
The footstep of a secret foe.*
If courtly spy hath harbour'd here,
What may we for the Douglas fear?
What for this island, deem'd of old
Clan-Alpine's last and surest hold?
If neither spy nor foe, I pray,
What yet may jealous Roderick say?
—Nay, wave not thy disdainful head,
Bethink thee of the discord dread
That kindled when at Beltane game
Thou ledd'st the dance with Malcolm Græme;
Still, though thy sire the peace renew'd,
Smoulders in Roderick's breast the feud.
Beware!—But hark, what sounds are these?
My dull ears catch no faltering breeze,
No weeping birch nor aspens wake,
Nor breath is dimpling in the lake,
Still is the canna's† hoary beard,
Yet, by my minstrel faith, I heard—
And hark again! some pipe of war
Sends the bold pibroch from afar."

XVI.

Far up the lengthen'd lake were spied
Four darkening specks upon the tide,
That, slow enlarging on the view,
Four mann'd and masted barges grew,
And, bearing downwards from Glengyle,
Steer'd full upon the lonely isle;
The point of Brianchoil they pass'd,
And, to the windward as they cast,
Against the sun they gave to shine
The bold Sir Roderick's banner'd Pine.
Nearer and nearer as they bear,
Spear, pikes, and axes flash in air.
Now might you see the tartans brave,
And plaids and plumage dance and wave:
Now see the bonnets sink and rise,
As his tough oar the rower plies;
See, flashing at each sturdy stroke,
The wave ascending into smoke;
See the proud pipers on the bow,
And mark the gaudy streamers flow
From their loud chanters‡ down, and sweep
The furrow'd bosom of the deep,
As, rushing through the lake amain,
They plied the ancient Highland strain.

XVII.

Ever, as on they bore, more loud
And louder rung the pibroch proud.
At first the sound, by distance tame,
Mellow'd along the waters came,
And, lingering long by cape and bay,
Wail'd every harsher note away;
Then bursting bolder on the ear,
The clan's shrill Gathering they could hear;
Those thrilling sounds, that call the might
Of Old Clan-Alpine to the fight.*
Thick beat the rapid notes, as when
The mustering hundreds shake the glen,
And, hurrying at the signal dread,
The batter'd earth returns their tread.
Then prelude light, of livelier tone,
Express'd their merry marching on,
Ere peal of closing battle rose,
With mingled outcry, shrieks, and blows;
And mimic din of stroke and ward,
As broadsword upon target jarr'd;
And groaning pause, ere yet again,
Condensed, the battle yell'd amain;
The rapid charge, the rallying shout,
Retreat borne headlong into rout,
And bursts of triumph, to declare
Clan-Alpine's conquest—all were there.
Nor ended thus the strain; but slow
Sunk in a moan prolong'd and low,
And changed the conquering clarion swell,
For wild lament o'er those that fell.

XVIII.

The war-pipes ceased; but lake and hill
Were busy with their echoes still;
And, when they slept, a vocal strain
Bade their hoarse chorus wake again,
While loud a hundred clansmen raise
Their voices in their Chieftain's praise.
Each boatman, bending to his oar,
With measured sweep the burden bore,
In such wild cadence, as the breeze
Makes through December's leafless trees.
The chorus first could Allan know,
"Roderick Vich Alpine, ho! iro!"
And near, and nearer as they row'd,
Distinct the martial ditty flow'd.

XIX.

BOAT SONG.

Hail to the Chief who in triumph advances! [Pine!
Honour'd and bless'd be the ever-green
Long may the tree, in his banner that glances, [line!
Flourish, the shelter and grace of our Heaven send it happy dew,
Earth lend it sap anew,
Gaily to bourgeon, and broadly to grow,
While every Highland glen
Sends our shout back agen,
"Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho! ieroe!"*
Ours is no sapling, chance-sown by the fountain,
Blooming at Beltane, in winter to fade;

† The cotton-grass.
‡ The *pipe* of the bagpipe.

When the whirlwind has stripp'd every leaf on the mountain,
The more shall Clan-Alpine exult in her shade.
Moor'd in the rifted rock,
Proof to the tempest's shock,
Firmer he roots him the ruder it blow;
Menteith and Breadalbane, then,
Echo his praise agen,
"Roderigh† Vich Alpine dhu, ho! ieroe!"

XX.

Proudly our Pibroch has thrill'd in Glen Fruin,
And Bannochar's groans to our slogan replied;
Glen Luss and Ross-dhu, they are smoking in ruin,
And the best of Loch Lomond lie dead on her side.
Widow and Saxon maid
Long shall lament our raid,
Think of Clan-Alpine with fear and with woe;
Lennox and Leven-glen
Shake when they hear agen,
"Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho! ieroe!"

Row, vassals, row, for the pride of the Highlands!
Stretch to your oars, for the ever-green Pine!
O that the rosebud that graces yon islands
Were wreathed in a garland around him to twine!
O that some seedling gem,
Worthy such noble stem,
Honour'd and bless'd in their shadow might grow!
Loud should Clan-Alpine then
Ring from the deepmost glen,
"Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho! ieroe!"

XXI.

With all her joyful female band,
Had Lady Margaret sought the strand.
Loose on the breeze their tresses flew,
And high their snowy arms they threw,
As echoing back with shrill acclaim,
And chorus wild, the Chieftain's name;
While, prompt to please, with mother's art,
The darling passion of his heart,
The Dame call'd Ellen to the strand,
To greet her kinsman ere he land:
"Come, loiterer, come! a Douglas thou,
And shun to wreathe a victor's brow!"—
Reluctantly and slow, the maid
The unwelcome summoning obey'd,
And, when a distant bugle rung,
In the mid-path aside she sprung:—
"List, Allan-Bane! From mainland cast
I hear my father's signal blast.
Be ours," she cried, "the skiff to guide,
And waft him from the mountain side."
Then, like a sunbeam, swift and bright,
She darted to her shallop light,
And, eagerly while Roderick scann'd,
For her dear form, his mother's band,
The islet far behind her lay,
And she had landed in the bay.

XXII.

Some feelings are to mortals given,
With less of earth in them than heaven;
And if there be a human tear
From passion's dross refined and clear,
A tear so limpid and so meek,
It would not stain an angel's cheek,
'Tis that which pious fathers shed
Upon a duteous daughter's head!
And as the Douglas to his breast
His darling Ellen closely press'd,
Such holy drops her tresses steep'd,
Though 'twas a hero's eye that weep'd.
Nor while on Ellen's faltering tongue
Her filial welcomes crowded hung,
Mark'd she that fear (affection's proof)
Still held a graceful youth aloof;
No! not till Douglas named his name,
Although the youth was Malcolm Græme.

XXIII.

Allan, with wistful look the while,
Mark'd Roderick landing on the isle;
His master piteously he eyed,
Then gazed upon the Chieftain's pride,
Then dash'd, with hasty hand, away
From his dimm'd eye the gathering spray;
And Douglas, as his hand he laid
On Malcolm's shoulder, kindly said, [spy
"Canst thou, young friend, no meaning
In my poor follower's glistening eye?
I'll tell thee:—he recalls the day
When in my praise he led the lay
O'er the arch'd gate of Bothwell proud,
While many a minstrel answer'd loud,
When Percy's Norman pennon, won
In bloody field, before me shone,
And twice ten knights, the least a name
As mighty as yon Chief may claim,
Gracing my pomp, behind me came.
Yet trust me, Malcolm, not so proud
Was I of all that marshall'd crowd,
Though the waned crescent own'd my might,
And in my train troop'd lord and knight,
Though Blantyre hymn'd her holiest lays,
And Bothwell's bards flung back my praise,
As when this old man's silent tear,
And this poor maid's affection dear,
A welcome gave more kind and true,
Than aught my better fortunes knew.
Forgive, my friend, a father's boast,
O! it out-beggars all I lost!"

† Black Roderick, the descendant of Alpine.

XXIV.

Delightful praise!—like summer rose,
That brighter in the dew-drop glows,
The bashful maiden's cheek appear'd,
For Douglas spoke and Malcolm heard.
The flush of shame-faced joy to hide,
The hounds, the hawk, her cares divide;
The loved caresses of the maid
The dogs with crouch and whimper paid;
And, at her whistle, on her hand
The falcon took his favourite stand,
Closed his dark wing, relax'd his eye,
Nor, though unhooded, sought to fly.
And, trust, while in such guise she stood,
Like fabled Goddess of the wood,
That if a father's partial thought
O'erweighed her worth and beauty aught,
Well might the lover's judgment fail
To balance with a juster scale;
For with each secret glance he stole,
The fond enthusiast sent his soul.

XXV.

Of stature tall, and slender frame,
But firmly knit, was Malcolm Græme.
The belted plaid and tartan hose
Did ne'er more graceful limbs disclose;
His flaxen hair, of sunny hue,
Curl'd closely round his bonnet blue.
Train'd to the chase, his eagle eye
The ptarmigan in snow could spy:
Each pass, by mountain, lake, and heath,
He knew, through Lennox and Menteith:
Vain was the bound of dark-brown doe,
When Malcolm bent his sounding bow;
And scarce that doe, though wing'd with fear,
Outstripp'd in speed the mountaineer:
Right up Ben-Lomond could he press,
And not a sob his toil confess.
His form accorded with a mind
Lively and ardent, frank and kind;
A blither heart, till Ellen came,
Did never love nor sorrow tame;
It danced as lightsome in his breast,
As play'd the feather on his crest.
Yet friends, who nearest knew the youth,
His scorn of wrong, his zeal for truth,
And bards, who saw his features bold,
When kindled by the tales of old,
Said, were that youth to manhood grown,
Not long should Roderick Dhu's renown
Be foremost voiced by mountain fame,
But quail to that of Malcolm Græme.

XXVI.

Now back they wend their watery way,
And, "O my sire!" did Ellen say,
"Why urge thy chase so far astray?
And why so late return'd?—And why"—
The rest was in her speaking eye.—
"My child, the chase I follow far,
'Tis mimicry of noble war;
And with that gallant pastime reft
Were all of Douglas I have left.
I met young Malcolm as I stray'd
Far eastward, in Glenfinlas' shade,
Nor stray'd I safe; for, all around,
Hunters and horsemen scour'd the ground.
This youth, though still a royal ward,
Risk'd life and land to be my guard,
And through the passes of the wood
Guided my steps, not unpursued;
And Roderick shall his welcome make,
Despite old spleen, for Douglas' sake.
Then must he seek Strath-Endrick glen,
Nor peril aught for me agen."

XXVII.

Sir Roderick, who to meet them came,
Redden'd at sight of Malcolm Græme,
Yet, not in action, word, or eye,
Fail'd aught in hospitality.
In talk and sport they whiled away
The morning of that summer day;
But at high noon a courier light
Held secret parley with the knight,
Whose moody aspect soon declared,
That evil were the news he heard.
Deep thought seem'd toiling in his head;
Yet was the evening banquet made,
Ere he assembled round the flame,
His mother, Douglas, and the Græme,
And Ellen, too; then cast around
His eyes, then fix'd them on the ground,
As studying phrase that might avail
Best to convey unpleasant tale.
Long with his dagger's hilt he play'd,
Then raised his haughty brow and said:—

XXVIII.

"Short be my speech;—nor time affords,
Nor my plain temper, glozing words.
Kinsman and father,—if such name
Douglas vouchsafe to Roderick's claim;
Mine honour'd mother:—Ellen—why,
My cousin, turn away thine eye?—
And Græme; in whom I hope to know
Full soon a noble friend or foe,
When age shall give thee thy command,
And leading in thy native land,—
List all!—The King's vindictive pride
Boasts to have tamed the Border-side,
Where chiefs, with hound and hawk who came
To share their monarch's sylvan game,
Themselves in bloody toils were snared;
And when the banquet they prepared,
And wide their loyal portals flung,
O'er their own gateway struggling hung.
Loud cries their blood from Meggat's mead,
From Yarrow braes, and banks of Tweed,

Where the lone streams of Ettrick glide,
And from the silver Teviot's side;
The dales, where martial clans did ride,
Are now one sheep-walk, waste and wide.
This tyrant of the Scottish throne,
So faithless, and so ruthless known,
Now hither comes; his end the same,
The same pretext of sylvan game.
What grace for Highland Chiefs, judge ye
By fate of Border chivalry.
Yet more; amid Glenfinlas green,
Douglas, thy stately form was seen—
This by espial sure I know:
Your counsel in the streight I show."

XXIX.

Ellen and Margaret fearfully
Sought comfort in each other's eye,
Then turn'd their ghastly look, each one,
This to her sire—that to her son.
The hasty colour went and came
In the bold cheek of Malcolm Græme;
But from his glance it well appear'd,
'Twas but for Ellen that he fear'd;
While, sorrowful, but undismay'd,
The Douglas thus his counsel said:—
"Brave Roderick, though the tempest roar,
It may but thunder, and pass o'er;
Nor will I here remain an hour,
To draw the lightning on thy bower;
For well thou know'st, at this grey head
The royal bolt were fiercest sped.
For thee, who, at thy King's command,
Canst aid him with a gallant band,
Submission, homage, humbled pride,
Shall turn the Monarch's wrath aside.
Poor remnants of the Bleeding Heart,
Ellen and I will seek, apart,
The refuge of some forest cell,
There, like the hunted quarry, dwell,
Till on the mountain and the moor,
The stern pursuit be pass'd and o'er."—

XXX.

"No, by mine honour," Roderick said,
"So help me, Heaven, and my good blade!
No, never! Blasted be yon Pine,
My fathers' ancient crest and mine,
If from its shade in danger part
The lineage of the Bleeding Heart!
Hear my blunt speech: grant me this maid
To wife, thy counsel to mine aid;
To Douglas, leagued with Roderick Dhu,
Will friends and allies flock enow;
Like cause of doubt, distrust, and grief,
Will bind to us each Western Chief.
When the loud pipes my bridal tell,
The Links of Forth shall hear the knell,
The guards shall start in Stirling's porch;
And, when I light the nuptial torch,
A thousand villages in flames
Shall scare the slumbers of King James!
—Nay, Ellen, blench not thus away,
And, mother, cease these signs, I pray;
I meant not all my heart might say.
Small need of inroad, or of fight,
When the sage Douglas may unite
Each mountain clan in friendly band,
To guard the passes of their land,
Till the foil'd king, from pathless glen,
Shall bootless turn him home agen."

XXXI.

There are who have, at midnight hour,
In slumber scaled a dizzy tower,
And, on the verge that beetled o'er
The ocean-tide's incessant roar,
Dream'd calmly out their dangerous dream,
Till waken'd by the morning beam;
When, dazzled by the eastern glow,
Such startler cast his glance below,
And saw unmeasured depth around,
And heard unintermitted sound,
And thought the battled fence so frail,
It waved like cobweb in the gale;—
Amid his senses' giddy wheel,
Did he not desperate impulse feel,
Headlong to plunge himself below,
And meet the worst his fears foreshow?—
Thus Ellen, dizzy and astound,
As sudden ruin yawn'd around,
By crossing terrors wildly toss'd,
Still for the Douglas fearing most,
Could scarce the desperate thought withstand,
To buy his safety with her hand.

XXXII.

Such purpose dread could Malcolm spy
In Ellen's quivering lip and eye,
And eager rose to speak—but ere
His tongue could hurry forth his fear,
Had Douglas mark'd the hectic strife,
Where death seem'd combating with life;
For to her cheek, in feverish flood,
One instant rush'd the throbbing blood,
Then ebbing back, with sudden sway,
Left its domain as wan as clay.
"Roderick, enough! enough!" he cried,
"My daughter cannot be thy bride;
Not that the blush to wooer dear,
Nor paleness that of maiden fear.
It may not be—forgive her, Chief,
Nor hazard aught for our relief.
Against his sovereign, Douglas ne'er
Will level a rebellious spear.
'Twas I that taught his youthful hand
To rein a steed and wield a brand;
I see him yet, the princely boy!
Not Ellen more my pride and joy;
I love him still, despite my wrongs,
By hasty wrath, and slanderous tongues.
O seek the grace you well may find,
Without a cause to mine combined."

XXXIII.

Twice through the hall the Chieftain strode;
The waving of his tartans broad,
And darken'd brow, where wounded pride
With ire and disappointment vied,
Seem'd, by the torch's gloomy light,
Like the ill Demon of the night,
Stooping his pinions' shadowy sway
Upon the nighted pilgrim's way:
But, unrequited Love! thy dart
Plunged deepest its envenom'd smart,
And Roderick, with thine anguish stung,
At length the hand of Douglas wrung,
While eyes, that mock'd at tears before,
With bitter drops were running o'er.
The death-pangs of long-cherished hope
Scarce in that ample breast had scope,
But, struggling with his spirit proud,
Convulsive heaved its chequer'd shroud,
While every sob—so mute were all—
Was heard distinctly through the hall.
The son's despair, the mother's look,
Ill might the gentle Ellen brook;
She rose, and to her side there came,
To aid her parting steps, the Græme.

XXXIV.

Then Roderick from the Douglas broke—
As flashes flame through sable smoke,
Kindling its wreaths, long, dark, and low,
To one broad blaze of ruddy glow,
So the deep anguish of despair
Burst, in fierce jealousy, to air.
With stalwart grasp his hand he laid
On Malcolm's breast and belted plaid:
"Back, beardless boy!" he sternly said,
"Back, minion! hold'st thou thus at nought
The lesson I so lately taught?
This roof, the Douglas, and that maid,
Thank thou for punishment delay'd."
Eager as greyhound on his game,
Fiercely with Roderick grappled Græme.
"Perish my name, if aught afford
Its Chieftain safety save his sword!"
Thus, as they strove, their desperate hand
Griped to the dagger or the brand,
And death had been—but Douglas rose,
And thrust between the struggling foes
His giant strength:—"Chieftains, forego!
I hold the first who strikes, my foe.—
Madmen, forbear your frantic jar!
What! is the Douglas fall'n so far,
His daughter's hand is doom'd the spoil
Of such dishonourable broil!"
Sullen and slowly they unclasp,
As struck with shame, their desperate grasp,
And each upon his rival glared,
With foot advanced, and blade half bared.

XXXV.

Ere yet the brands aloft were flung,
Margaret on Roderick's mantle hung,
And Malcolm heard his Ellen's scream,
As falter'd through terrific dream.
Then Roderick plunged in sheath his sword,
And veil'd his wrath in scornful word:
"Rest safe till morning; pity 'twere
Such cheek should feel the midnight air!
Then mayest thou to James Stuart tell,
Roderick will keep the lake and fell,
Nor lackey, with his freeborn clan,
The pageant pomp of earthly man.
More would he of Clan-Alpine know,
Thou canst our strength and passes show.—
Malise, what ho!"—his henchman came;
"Give our safe-conduct to the Græme."
Young Malcolm answer'd, calm and bold,
"Fear nothing for thy favourite hold;
The spot an angel deign'd to grace
Is bless'd, though robbers haunt the place.
Thy churlish courtesy for those
Reserve, who fear to be thy foes.
As safe to me the mountain way
At midnight as in blaze of day,
Though with his boldest at his back,
Even Roderick Dhu beset the track.—
Brave Douglas,—lovely Ellen,—nay,
Nought here of parting will I say.
Earth does not hold a lonesome glen
So secret, but we meet agen.—
Chieftain! we too shall find an hour,"—
He said, and left the sylvan bower.

XXXVI.

Old Allan follow'd to the strand
(Such was the Douglas's command),
And anxious told, how, on the morn,
The stern Sir Roderick deep had sworn,
The Fiery Cross should circle o'er
Dale, glen, and valley, down, and moor.
Much were the peril to the Græme,
From those who to the signal came;
Far up the lake 'twere safest land,
Himself would row him to the strand.
He gave his counsel to the wind,
While Malcolm did, unheeding, bind,
Round dirk and pouch and broadsword
His ample plaid in tighten'd fold,
And stripp'd his limbs to such array,
As best might suit the watery way,—

XXXVII.

Then spoke abrupt: "Farewell to thee,
Pattern of old fidelity!"
The Minstrel's hand he kindly press'd,—
"O! could I point a place of rest!
My sovereign holds in ward my land,
My uncle leads my vassal band;
To tame his foes, his friends to aid,
Poor Malcolm has but heart and blade.
Yet, if there be one faithful Græme,
Who loves the chieftain of his name,

Not long shall honour'd Douglas dwell,
Like hunted stag, in mountain cell;
Nor, ere yon pride-swoll'n robber dare,—
I may not give the rest to air!
Tell Roderick Dhu, I owed him nought,
Not the poor service of a boat,
To waft me to yon mountain-side."
Then plunged he in the flashing tide.
Bold o'er the flood his head he bore,
And stoutly steer'd him from the shore;
And Allan strain'd his anxious eye,
Far 'mid the lake his form to spy.
Darkening across each puny wave
To which the moon her silver gave,
Fast as the cormorant could skim,
The swimmer plied each active limb;
Then landing in the moonlight dell,
Loud shouted of his weal to tell.
The Minstrel heard the far halloo,
And joyful from the shore withdrew.

CANTO THIRD.

THE GATHERING.

I.

TIME rolls his ceaseless course. The race of yore,
Who danced our infancy upon their knee,
And told our marvelling boyhood legends store,
Of their strange ventures happ'd by land or sea,
How are they blotted from the things that be!
How few, all weak and wither'd of their force,
Wait on the verge of dark eternity,
Like stranded wrecks, the tide returning hoarse,
To sweep them from our sight! Time rolls his ceaseless course.

Yet live there still who can remember well,
How, when a mountain chief his bugle blew,
Both field and forest, dingle, cliff, and dell,
And solitary heath, the signal knew;
And fast the faithful clan around him drew,
What time the warning note was keenly wound,
What time aloft their kindred banner flew,
While clamorous war-pipes yell'd the gathering sound,
And while the Fiery Cross glanced, like a meteor, round.*

II.

The summer dawn's reflected hue
To purple changed Loch Katrine blue;
Mildly and soft the western breeze
Just kiss'd the lake, just stirr'd the trees;
And the pleased lake, like maiden coy,
Trembled but dimpled not for joy;
The mountain-shadows on her breast
Were neither broken nor at rest;
In bright uncertainty they lie,
Like future joys to Fancy's eye.
The water-lily to the light
Her chalice rear'd of silver bright;
The doe awoke, and to the lawn,
Begemm'd with dew-drops, led her fawn;
The grey mist left the mountain-side,
The torrent show'd its glistening pride;
Invisible in flecked sky,
The lark sent down her revelry;
The blackbird and the speckled thrush
Good-morrow gave from brake and bush;
In answer coo'd the cushat dove
Her notes of peace, and rest, and love.

III.

No thought of peace, no thought of rest,
Assuaged the storm in Roderick's breast.
With sheathèd broadsword in his hand,
Abrupt he paced the islet strand,
And eyed the rising sun, and laid
His hand on his impatient blade.
Beneath a rock, his vassals' care
Was prompt the ritual to prepare,
With deep and deathful meaning fraught;
For such Antiquity had taught
Was preface meet, ere yet abroad
The Cross of Fire should take its road.
The shrinking band stood oft aghast
At the impatient glance he cast;—
Such glance the mountain eagle threw,
As, from the cliffs of Benvenue,
She spread her dark sails on the wind,
And, high in middle heav'n reclined,
With her broad shadow on the lake,
Silenced the warblers of the brake.

IV.

A heap of wither'd boughs was piled,
Of juniper and rowan wild,
Mingled with shivers from the oak,
Rent by the lightning's recent stroke.
Brian, the Hermit, by it stood,
Barefooted, in his frock and hood.
His grisled beard and matted hair
Obscured a visage of despair;
His naked arms and legs, seam'd o'er,
The scars of frantic penance bore.
That monk, of savage form and face,*
The impending danger of his race
Had drawn from deepest solitude,
Far in Benharrow's bosom rude.
Not his the mien of Christian priest,
But Druid's, from the grave released,
Whose harden'd heart and eye might
On human sacrifice to look; brook
And much, 'twas said, of heathen lore
Mix'd in the charms he mutter'd o'er.
The hallow'd creed gave only worse
And deadlier emphasis of curse;

No peasant sought that Hermit's prayer,
His cave the Pilgrim shunn'd with care,
The eager huntsman knew his bound,
And in mid chase call'd off his hound;
Or if, in lonely glen or strath,
The desert-dweller met his path,
He pray'd, and sign'd the cross between,
While terror took devotion's mien.

V.

Of Brian's birth strange tales were told.*
His mother watch'd a midnight fold,
Built deep within a dreary glen,
Where scatter'd lay the bones of men,
In some forgotten battle slain,
And bleach'd by drifting wind and rain.
It might have tamed a warrior's heart,
To view such mockery of his art!
The knot-grass fetter'd there the hand,
Which once could burst an iron band;
Beneath the broad and ample bone,
That buckler'd heart to fear unknown,
A feeble and a timorous guest,
The field-fare framed her lowly nest;
There the slow blind-worm left his slime
On the fleet limbs that mock'd at time;
And there, too, lay the leader's skull,
Still wreathed with chaplet, flush'd and full,
For heath-bell with her purple bloom
Supplied the bonnet and the plume.
All night, in this sad glen, the maid
Sate, shrouded in her mantle's shade:
—She said, no shepherd sought her side,
No hunter's hand her snood untied,
Yet ne'er again, to braid her hair,
The virgin snood did Alice wear;*
Gone was her maiden glee and sport,
Her maiden girdle all too short;
Nor sought she, from that fatal night,
Or holy church, or blessèd rite,
But lock'd her secret in her breast,
And died in travail, unconfess'd.

VI.

Alone, among his young compeers,
Was Brian from his infant years;
A moody and heart-broken boy,
Estranged from sympathy and joy,
Bearing each taunt which careless tongue
On his mysterious lineage flung.
Whole nights he spent by moonlight pale,
To wood and stream his hap to wail,
Till, frantic, he as truth received
What of his birth the crowd believed,
And sought, in mist and meteor fire,
To meet and know his Phantom Sire!
In vain, to soothe his wayward fate,
The cloister oped her pitying gate;
In vain, the learning of the age
Unclasp'd the sable-letter'd page;
Even in its treasures he could find
Food for the fever of his mind.

Eager he read whatever tells
Of magic, cabala, and spells,
And every dark pursuit allied
To curious and presumptuous pride;
Till, with fired brain and nerves o'erstrung,
And heart with mystic horrors wrung,
Desperate he sought Benharrow's den,
And hid him from the haunts of men.

VII.

The desert gave him visions wild,
Such as might suit the spectre's child.
Where with black cliffs the torrents toil,
He watch'd the wheeling eddies boil,
Till, from their foam, his dazzled eyes
Beheld the River Demon rise;
The mountain mist took form and limb,
Of noontide hag, or goblin grim;
The midnight wind came wild and dread,
Swell'd with the voices of the dead;
Far on the future battle-heath
His eye beheld the ranks of death:
Thus the lone Seer, from mankind hurl'd,
Shaped forth a disembodied world.
One lingering sympathy of mind
Still bound him to the mortal kind;
The only parent he could claim
Of ancient Alpine's lineage came.
Late had he heard, in prophet's dream,
The fatal Ben-Shie's boding scream;*
Sounds, too, had come in midnight blast,
Of charging steeds, careering fast
Along Benharrow's shingly side,
Where mortal horsemen ne'er might ride;*
The thunderbolt had split the pine,—
All augur'd ill to Alpine's line.
He girt his loins, and came to show
The signals of impending woe,
And now stood prompt to bless or ban,
As bade the Chieftain of his clan.

VIII.

'Twas all prepared;—and from the rock,
A goat, the patriarch of the flock,
Before the kindling pile was laid,
And pierced by Roderick's ready blade.
Patient the sickening victim eyed
The life-blood ebb in crimson tide,
Down his clogg'd beard and shaggy limb,
Till darkness glazed his eyeballs dim.
The grisly priest, with murmuring prayer,
A slender crosslet form'd with care,
A cubit's length in measure due;
The shaft and limbs were rods of yew,
Whose parents in Inch-Cailliach wave
Their shadows o'er Clan-Alpine's grave,
And, answering Lomond's breezes deep,
Soothe many a chieftain's endless sleep.
The Cross, thus form'd, he held on high,
With wasted hand, and haggard eye,
And strange and mingled feelings woke,
While his anathema he spoke:

IX.

"Woe to the clansman, who shall view
This symbol of sepulchral yew,
Forgetful that its branches grew
Where weep the heavens their holiest dew,
On Alpine's dwelling low!
Deserter of his Chieftain's trust,
He ne'er shall mingle with their dust,
But, from his sires and kindred thrust,
Each clansman's execration just
Shall doom him wrath and woe."
He paused;—the word the vassals took,
With forward step and fiery look,
On high their naked brands they shook,
Their clattering targets wildly strook;
And first in murmur low,
Then, like the billow in his course,
That far to seaward finds his source,
And flings to shore his muster'd force,
Burst, with loud roar, their answer hoarse,
"Woe to the traitor, woe!"
Ben-an's grey scalp the accents knew,
The joyous wolf from covert drew,
The exulting eagle scream'd afar,—
They knew the voice of Alpine's war.

X.

The shout was hush'd on lake and fell,
The Monk resumed his mutter'd spell:
Dismal and low its accents came,
The while he scathed the Cross with flame;
And the few words that reach'd the air,
Although the holiest name was there,
Had more of blasphemy than prayer.
But when he shook above the crowd
Its kindled points, he spoke aloud:—
"Woe to the wretch who fails to rear
At this dread sign the ready spear!
For, as the flames this symbol sear,
His home, the refuge of his fear,
A kindred fate shall know;
Far o'er its roof the volumed flame
Clan-Alpine's vengeance shall proclaim,
While maids and matrons on his name
Shall call down wretchedness and shame,
And infamy and woe."
Then rose the cry of females, shrill
As goss-hawk's whistle on the hill,
Denouncing misery and ill,
Mingled with childhood's babbling trill
Of curses stammer'd slow;
Answering, with imprecation dread,
"Sunk be his home in embers red!
And cursèd be the meanest shed
That e'er shall hide the houseless head
We doom to want and woe!"
A sharp and shrieking echo gave,
Coir-Uriskin, thy goblin cave!
And the grey pass where birches wave,
On Beala-nam-bo.

XI.

Then deeper paused the priest anew,
And hard his labouring breath he drew,
While, with set teeth and clenchèd hand,
And eyes that glow'd like fiery brand,
He meditated curse more dread,
And deadlier, on the clansman's head,
Who, summon'd to his Chieftain's aid,
The signal saw, and disobey'd.
The crosslet's points of sparkling wood,
He quench'd among the bubbling blood,
And, as again the sign he rear'd,
Hollow and hoarse his voice was heard:
"When flits this Cross from man to man,
Vich-Alpine's summons to his clan,
Burst be the ear that fails to heed!
Palsied the foot that shuns to speed!
May ravens tear the careless eyes,
Wolves make the coward heart their prize!
As sinks that blood stream in the earth,
So may his heart's-blood drench his hearth!
As dies in hissing gore the spark,
Quench thou his light, Destruction dark,
And be the grace to him denied,
Bought by this sign to all beside!"
He ceased; no echo gave agen
The murmur of the deep Amen.

XII.

Then Roderick, with impatient look,
From Brian's hand the symbol took:
"Speed, Malise, speed!" he said, and gave
The crosslet to his henchman brave.
"The muster-place be Lanrick mead—
Instant the time—speed, Malise, speed!"
Like heath-bird, when the hawks pursue,
A barge across Loch Katrine flew;
High stood the henchman on the prow;
So rapidly the barge-men row,
The bubbles, where they launch'd the boat,
Were all unbroken and afloat,
Dancing in foam and ripple still,
When it had neared the mainland hill;
And from the silver beach's side
Still was the prow three fathoms wide,
When lightly bounded to the land
The messenger of blood and brand.

XIII.

Speed, Malise, speed! the dun deer's hide
On fleeter foot was never tied.*
Speed, Malise, speed! such cause of haste
Thine active sinews never braced.
Bend 'gainst the steepy hill thy breast,
Burst down like torrent from its crest;
With short and springing footstep pass
The trembling bog and false morass;
Across the brook like roebuck bound,
And thread the brake like questing hound;
The crag is high, the scaur is deep,
Yet shrink not from the desperate leap:

Parch'd are thy burning lips and brow,
Yet by the fountain pause not now;
Herald of battle, fate, and fear,
Stretch onward in thy fleet career!
The wounded hind thou track'st not now,
Pursuest not maid through greenwood bough,
Nor pliest thou now thy flying pace,
With rivals in the mountain race;
But danger, death, and warrior deed,
Are in thy course—speed, Malise, speed!

XIV.

Fast as the fatal symbol flies,
In arms the huts and hamlets rise;
From winding glen, from upland brown,
They pour'd each hardy tenant down.
Nor slack'd the messenger his pace;
He show'd the sign, he named the place,
And, pressing forward like the wind,
Left clamour and surprise behind.
The fisherman forsook the strand,
The swarthy smith took dirk and brand;
With changèd cheer, the mower blithe
Left in the half-cut swathe the scythe;
The herds without a keeper stray'd,
The plough was in mid-furrow staid,
The falc'ner toss'd his hawk away,
The hunter left the stag at bay;
Prompt at the signal of alarms,
Each son of Alpine rush'd to arms;
So swept the tumult and affray
Along the margin of Achray.
Alas! thou lovely lake! that e'er
Thy banks should echo sounds of fear!
The rocks, the bosky thickets, sleep
So stilly on thy bosom deep,
The lark's blithe carol, from the cloud,
Seems for the scene too gaily loud.

XV.

Speed, Malise, speed!—The lake is past,
Duncraggan's huts appear at last,
And peep, like moss-grown rocks, half
Half hidden in the copse so green; [seen,
There mayst thou rest, thy labour done,
Their Lord shall speed the signal on.—
As stoops the hawk upon his prey,
The henchman shot him down the way.
—What woeful accents load the gale?
The funeral yell, the female wail!
A gallant hunter's sport is o'er,
A valiant warrior fights no more.
Who, in the battle or the chase,
At Roderick's side shall fill his place!—
Within the hall, where torches' ray
Supplies the excluded beams of day,
Lies Duncan on his lowly bier,
And o'er him streams his widow's tear.
His stripling son stands mournful by,
His youngest weeps, but knows not why;
The village maids and matrons round
The dismal coronach resound.*

XVI.

CORONACH.

He is gone on the mountain,
He is lost to the forest,
Like a summer-dried fountain,
When our need was the sorest.
The font, reappearing,
From the rain-drops shall borrow,
But to us comes no cheering,
To Duncan no morrow!

The hand of the reaper
Takes the ears that are hoary,
But the voice of the weeper
Wails manhood in glory.
The autumn winds rushing
Waft the leaves that are searest,
But our flower was in flushing,
When blighting was nearest.

Fleet foot on the correi,†
Sage counsel in cumber,
Red hand in the foray,
How sound is thy slumber!
Like the dew on the mountain,
Like the foam on the river,
Like the bubble on the fountain,
Thou art gone, and for ever!

XVII.

See Stumah,‡ who, the bier beside,
His master's corpse with wonder eyed,
Poor Stumah! whom his least halloo
Could send like lightning o'er the dew,
Bristles his crest, and points his ears,
As if some stranger step he hears.
'Tis not a mourner's muffled tread,
Who comes to sorrow o'er the dead,
But headlong haste, or deadly fear,
Urge the precipitate career.
All stand aghast:—unheeding all,
The henchman bursts into the hall;
Before the dead man's bier he stood;
Held forth the Cross besmear'd with blood;
"The muster-place is Lanrick mead;
Speed forth the signal! clansmen, speed!"

XVIII.

Angus, the heir of Duncan's line,
Sprung forth and seized the fatal sign.
In haste the stripling to his side
His father's dirk and broadsword tied;
But when he saw his mother's eye
Watch him in speechless agony,
Back to her open'd arms he flew,
Press'd on her lips a fond adieu—
"Alas!" she sobb'd,—"and yet, be gone,
And speed thee forth, like Duncan's son!"

† Or *corri*, the hollow side of the hill, where game usually lies.

‡ *Faithful*, the name of a dog.

One look he cast upon the bier,
Dash'd from his eye the gathering tear,
Breathed deep to clear his labouring breast,
And toss'd aloft his bonnet crest,
Then, like the high-bred colt, when, freed,
First he essays his fire and speed,
He vanished, and o'er moor and moss
Sped forward with the Fiery Cross.
Suspended was the widow's tear,
While yet his footsteps she could hear;
And when she mark'd the henchman's eye
Wet with unwonted sympathy,
"Kinsman," she said, "his race is run,
That should have sped thy errand on;
The oak has fall'n,—the sapling bough
Is all Duncraggan's shelter now.
Yet trust I well, his duty done,
The orphan's God will guard my son.—
And you, in many a danger true,
At Duncan's hest your blades that drew,
To arms, and guard that orphan's head!
Let babes and women wail the dead."
Then weapon-clang, and martial call,
Resounded through the funeral hall,
While from the walls the attendant band
Snatch'd sword and targe, with hurried hand;
And short and flitting energy
Glanced from the mourner's sunken eye,
As if the sounds to warrior dear,
Might rouse her Duncan from his bier.
But faded soon that borrowed force;
Grief claim'd his right, and tears their course.

XIX.

Benledi saw the Cross of Fire,
It glanced like lightning up Strath-Ire.
O'er dale and hill the summons flew,
Nor rest nor pause young Angus knew;
The tear that gather'd in his eye
He left the mountain breeze to dry;
Until, where Teith's young waters roll,
Betwixt him and a wooded knoll,
That graced the sable strath with green,
The chapel of Saint Bride was seen.
Swoln was the stream, remote the bridge,
But Angus paused not on the edge;
Though the dark waves danced dizzily,
Though reel'd his sympathetic eye,
He dash'd amid the torrent's roar:
His right hand high the crosslet bore,
His left the pole-axe grasp'd, to guide
And stay his footing in the tide. [high,
He stumbled twice — the foam splash'd
With hoarser swell the stream raced by;
And had he fall'n,—for ever there,
Farewell Duncraggan's orphan heir!
But still, as if in parting life,
Firmer he grasp'd the Cross of strife,
Until the opposing bank he gain'd,
And up the chapel pathway strain'd.

XX.

A blithesome rout, that morning tide,
Had sought the chapel of Saint Bride.
Her troth Tombea's Mary gave
To Norman, heir of Armandave,
And, issuing from the Gothic arch,
The bridal now resumed their march.
In rude, but glad procession, came
Bonneted sire and coif-clad dame;
And plaided youth, with jest and jeer,
Which snooded maiden would not hear;
And children, that, unwitting why,
Lent the gay shout their shrilly cry;
And minstrels, that in measures vied
Before the young and bonny bride,
Whose downcast eye and cheek disclose
The tear and blush of morning rose.
With virgin step, and bashful hand,
She held the 'kerchief's snowy band;
The gallant bridegroom by her side,
Beheld his prize with victor's pride,
And the glad mother in her ear
Was closely whispering word of cheer.

XXI.

Who meets them at the churchyard gate?
The messenger of fear and fate!
Haste in his hurried accent lies,
And grief is swimming in his eyes.
All dripping from the recent flood,
Panting and travel-soil'd he stood,
The fatal sign of fire and sword [word:
Held forth, and spoke the appointed
"The muster-place is Lanrick mead;
Speed forth the signal! Norman, speed!"
And must he change so soon the hand,
Just link'd to his by holy band,
For the fell Cross of blood and brand?
And must the day, so blithe that rose,
And promised rapture in the close,
Before its setting hour, divide
The bridegroom from the plighted bride?
O fatal doom!—it must! it must!
Clan-Alpine's cause, her Chieftain's trust,
Her summons dread, brook no delay;
Stretch to the race—away! away!

XXII.

Yet slow he laid his plaid aside,
And, lingering, eyed his lovely bride,
Until he saw the starting tear
Speak woe he might not stop to cheer;
Then, trusting not a second look,
In haste he sped him up the brook,
Nor backward glanced, till on the heath
Where Lubnaig's lake supplies the Teith.
—What in the racer's bosom stirr'd?
The sickening pang of hope deferr'd,
And memory, with a torturing train
Of all his morning visions vain.
Mingled with love's impatience, came
The manly thirst for martial fame;

The stormy joy of mountaineers,
Ere yet they rush upon the spears;
And zeal for Clan and Chieftain burning,
And hope, from well-fought field returning,
With war's red honours on his crest,
To clasp his Mary to his breast. [brae,
Stung by such thoughts, o'er bank and
Like fire from flint he glanced away,
While high resolve, and feeling strong,
Burst into voluntary song.

XXIII.

SONG.

The heath this night must be my bed,
The bracken† curtain for my head,
My lullaby the warder's tread,
Far, far, from love and thee, Mary;
To-morrow eve, more stilly laid,
My couch may be my bloody plaid,
My vesper song thy wail, sweet maid!
It will not waken me, Mary!

I may not, dare not, fancy now
The grief that clouds thy lovely brow;
I dare not think upon thy vow,
And all it promised me, Mary.
No fond regret must Norman know;
When bursts Clan-Alpine on the foe,
His heart must be like bended bow,
His foot like arrow free, Mary.

A time will come with feeling fraught,
For, if I fall in battle fought,
Thy hapless lover's dying thought
Shall be a thought on thee, Mary.
And if returned from conquer'd foes,
How blithely will the evening close,
How sweet the linnet sing repose,
To my young bride and me, Mary!

XXIV.

Not faster o'er thy heathery braes,
Balquhidder, speeds the midnight blaze,*
Rushing, in conflagration strong,
Thy deep ravines and dells along,
Wrapping thy cliffs in purple glow,
And reddening the dark lakes below;
Nor faster speeds it, nor so far,
As o'er thy heaths the voice of war.
The signal roused to martial coil
The sullen margin of Loch Voil, [source
Waked still Loch Doine, and to the
Alarm'd, Balvaig, thy swampy course;
Thence southward turn'd its rapid road
Adown Strath-Gartney's valley broad,
Till rose in arms each man might claim
A portion in Clan-Alpine's name,
From the grey sire, whose trembling hand
Could hardly buckle on his brand,
To the raw boy, whose shaft and bow
Were yet scarce terror to the crow.

† *Bracken*, fern.

Each valley, each sequester'd glen,
Muster'd its little horde of men,
That met as torrents from the height
In Highland dales their streams unite,
Still gathering, as they pour along,
A voice more loud, a tide more strong,
Till at the rendezvous they stood [blood;
By hundreds prompt for blows and
Each train'd to arms since life began,
Owning no tie but to his clan,
No oath, but by his chieftain's hand,
No law, but Roderick Dhu's command.

XXV.

That summer morn had Roderick Dhu
Survey'd the skirts of Benvenue,
And sent his scouts o'er hill and heath,
To view the frontiers of Menteith.
All backward came with news of truce;
Still lay each martial Græme and Bruce,
In Rednock courts no horsemen wait,
No banner waved on Cardross gate,
On Duchray's towers no beacon shone,
Nor scared the herons from Loch Con;
All seem'd at peace.—Now wot ye why
The Chieftain, with such anxious eye,
Ere to the muster he repair,
This western frontier scann'd with care?—
In Benvenue's most darksome cleft,
A fair, though cruel, pledge was left;
For Douglas, to his promise true,
That morning from the isle withdrew,
And in a deep sequester'd dell
Had sought a low and lonely cell.
By many a bard, in Celtic tongue,
Has Coir-nan-Uriskin been sung;*
A softer name the Saxons gave,
And call'd the grot the Goblin-cave.

XXVI.

It was a wild and strange retreat,
As e'er was trod by outlaw's feet.
The dell, upon the mountain's crest,
Yawn'd like a gash on warrior's breast;
Its trench had staid full many a rock,
Hurl'd by primeval earthquake shock
From Benvenue's grey summit wild,
And here, in random ruin piled,
They frown'd incumbent o'er the spot,
And form'd the rugged sylvan grot.
The oak and birch, with mingled shade,
At noontide there a twilight made,
Unless when short and sudden shone
Some straggling beam on cliff or stone,
With such a glimpse as prophet's eye
Gains on thy depth, Futurity.
No murmur waked the solemn still,
Save tinkling of a fountain rill;
But when the wind chafed with the lake,
A sullen sound would upward break,
With dashing hollow voice, that spoke
The incessant war of wave and rock.

Suspended cliffs, with hideous sway,
Seem'd nodding o'er the cavern grey.
From such a den the wolf had sprung,
In such the wild-cat leaves her young;
Yet Douglas and his daughter fair
Sought for a space their safety there.
Grey Superstition's whisper dread
Debarr'd the spot to vulgar tread;
For there, she said, did fays resort,
And satyrs hold their sylvan court,
By moonlight tread their mystic maze,
And blast the rash beholder's gaze.

XXVII.

Now eve, with western shadows long,
Floated on Katrine bright and strong,
When Roderick, with a chosen few,
Repass'd the heights of Benvenue.
Above the Goblin-cave they go,
Through the wild pass of Beal-nam-bo:
The prompt retainers speed before,
To launch the shallop from the shore,
For 'cross Loch Katrine lies his way
To view the passes of Achray,
And place his clansmen in array.
Yet lags the chief in musing mind,
Unwonted sight, his men behind.
A single page, to bear his sword,
Alone attended on his lord;
The rest their way through thickets break,
And soon await him by the lake.
It was a fair and gallant sight, [height,
To view them from the neighbouring
By the low-levell'd sunbeam's light!
For strength and stature, from the clan
Each warrior was a chosen man,
As even afar might well be seen,
By their proud step and martial mien.
Their feathers dance, their tartans float,
Their targets gleam, as by the boat
A wild and warlike group they stand,
That well became such mountain-strand.

XXVIII.

Their Chief, with step reluctant, still
Was lingering on the craggy hill,
Hard by where turn'd apart the road
To Douglas's obscure abode.
It was but with that dawning morn,
That Roderick Dhu had proudly sworn
To drown his love in war's wild roar,
Nor think of Ellen Douglas more;
But he who stems a stream with sand,
And fetters flame with flaxen band,
Has yet a harder task to prove—
By firm resolve to conquer love!
Eve finds the Chief, like restless ghost,
Still hovering near his treasure lost;
For though his haughty heart deny
A parting meeting to his eye,
Still fondly strains his anxious ear,
The accents of her voice to hear,
And inly did he curse the breeze
That waked to sound the rustling trees.
But hark! what mingles in the strain?
It is the harp of Allan-Bane,
That wakes its measure slow and high,
Attuned to sacred minstrelsy.
What melting voice attends the strings?
'Tis Ellen, or an angel, sings.

XXIX.

HYMN TO THE VIRGIN.

Ave Maria! Maiden mild!
Listen to a maiden's prayer!
Thou canst hear though from the wild,
Thou canst save amid despair.
Safe may we sleep beneath thy care,
Though banish'd, outcast, and reviled—
Maiden! hear a maiden's prayer!
Mother, hear a suppliant child!
Ave Maria!

Ave Maria! undefiled!
The flinty couch we now must share
Shall seem with down of eider piled,
If thy protection hover there.
The murky cavern's heavy air
Shall breathe of balm if thou hast smiled;
Then, Maiden! hear a maiden's prayer!
Mother, list a suppliant child!
Ave Maria!

Ave Maria! stainless styled!
Foul demons of the earth and air,
From this their wonted haunt exiled,
Shall flee before thy presence fair.
We bow us to our lot of care,
Beneath thy guidance reconciled;
Hear for a maid a maiden's prayer!
And for a father hear a child!
Ave Maria!

XXX.

Died on the harp the closing hymn—
Unmoved in attitude and limb,
As list'ning still, Clan-Alpine's lord
Stood leaning on his heavy sword,
Until the page, with humble sign,
Twice pointed to the sun's decline.
Then while his plaid he round him cast,
"It is the last time—'tis the last,"
He muttered thrice,—"the last time e'er
That angel voice shall Roderick hear!"
It was a goading thought—his stride
Hied hastier down the mountain-side;
Sullen he flung him in the boat,
And instant 'cross the lake it shot.
They landed in that silvery bay,
And eastward held their hasty way,
Till, with the latest beams of light,
The band arrived on Lanrick height,
Where muster'd, in the vale below,
Clan-Alpine's men in martial show

XXXI.

A various scene the clansmen made;
Some sate, some stood, some slowly stray'd;
But most, with mantles folded round,
Were couch'd to rest upon the ground,
Scarce to be known by curious eye,
From the deep heather where they lie,
So well was match'd the tartan screen,
With heath-bell dark and brackens green;
Unless where, here and there, a blade,
Or lance's point, a glimmer made, [shade.
Like glow-worm twinkling through the
But when, advancing through the gloom,
They saw the Chieftain's eagle plume,
Their shout of welcome, shrill and wide,
Shook the steep mountain's steady side.
Thrice it rose, and lake and fell
Three times returned the martial yell;
It died upon Bochastle's plain,
And Silence claimed her evening reign.

CANTO FOURTH.

THE PROPHECY.

I.

"The rose is fairest when 'tis budding new,
And hope is brightest when it dawns
from fears; [dew,
The rose is sweetest wash'd with morning
And love is loveliest when embalm'd in
tears.
O wilding rose, whom fancy thus endears,
I bid your blossoms in my bonnet wave,
Emblem of hope and love through future
years!"— [Armandave,
Thus spoke young Norman, heir of
What time the sun arose on Vennachar's
broad wave.

II.

Such fond conceit, half said, half sung,
Love prompted to the bridegroom's
tongue.
All while he stripp'd the wild-rose spray,
His axe and bow beside him lay,
For on a pass 'twixt lake and wood,
A wakeful sentinel he stood.
Hark! on the rock a footstep rung,
And instant to his arms he sprung.
"Stand, or thou diest!—What, Malise?
—soon
Art thou return'd from Braes of Doune.
By thy keen step and glance I know,
Thou bring'st us tidings of the foe."—
(For while the Fiery Cross hied on,
On distant scout had Malise gone.)
"Where sleeps the Chief?" the hench-
man said.—
"Apart, in yonder misty glade;
To his lone couch I'll be your guide."—
Then call'd a slumberer by his side,
And stirr'd him with his slacken'd bow—
"Up, up, Glentarkin! rouse thee, ho!
We seek the Chieftain; on the track,
Keep eagle watch till I come back."

III.

Together up the pass they sped:
"What of the foeman?" Norman said.—
"Varying reports from near and far;
This certain,—that a band of war
Has for two days been ready boune,
At prompt command, to march from
Doune; [powers,
King James, the while, with princely
Holds revelry in Stirling towers.
Soon will this dark and gathering cloud
Speak on our glens in thunder loud.
Inured to bide such bitter bout,
The warrior's plaid may bear it out;
But, Norman, how wilt thou provide
A shelter for thy bonny bride?"—
"What! know ye not that Roderick's care
To the lone isle hath caused repair
Each maid and matron of the clan,
And every child and aged man
Unfit for arms; and given his charge,
Nor skiff nor shallop, boat nor barge,
Upon these lakes shall float at large,
But all beside the islet moor,
That such dear pledge may rest secure?"—

IV.

"'Tis well advised—the Chieftain's plan
Bespeaks the father of his clan.
But wherefore sleeps Sir Roderick Dhu
Apart from all his followers true?"—
"It is, because last evening-tide
Brian an augury hath tried,
Of that dread kind which must not be
Unless in dread extremity,
The Taghairm call'd; by which, afar,
Our sires foresaw the events of war.*
Duncraggan's milk-white bull they slew."

MALISE.

"Ah! well the gallant brute I knew!
The choicest of the prey we had,
When swept our merry-men Gallangad.
His hide was snow, his horns were dark,
His red eye glow'd like fiery spark;
So fierce, so tameless, and so fleet,
Sore did he cumber our retreat,
And kept our stoutest kernes in awe,
Even at the pass of Beal 'maha.
But steep and flinty was the road,
And sharp the hurrying pikemen's goad,
And when we came to Dennan's Row,
A child might scatheless stroke his
brow."—

V.

NORMAN.

"That bull was slain: his reeking hide
They stretch'd the cataract beside,

Whose waters their wild tumult toss
Adown the black and craggy boss
Of that huge cliff, whose ample verge
Tradition calls the Hero's Targe.*
Couch'd on a shelve beneath its brink,
Close where the thundering torrents sink,
Rocking beneath their headlong sway,
And drizzled by the ceaseless spray,
'Midst groan of rock, and roar of stream,
The wizard waits prophetic dream.
Nor distant rests the Chief;—but hush!
See, gliding slow through mist and bush,
The hermit gains yon rock, and stands
To gaze upon our slumbering bands.
Seems he not, Malise, like a ghost,
That hovers o'er a slaughter'd host?
Or raven on the blasted oak,
That, watching while the deer is broke,†
His morsel claims with sullen croak?"

MALISE.

—"Peace! peace! to other than to me,
Thy words were evil augury;
But still I hold Sir Roderick's blade
Clan-Alpine's omen and her aid,
Not aught that, glean'd from heaven or hell,
Yon fiend-begotten monk can tell.
The Chieftain joins him, see—and now,
Together they descend the brow."

VI.

And, as they came, with Alpine's Lord
The Hermit Monk held solemn word:—
"Roderick! it is a fearful strife,
For man endow'd with mortal life,
Whose shroud of sentient clay can still
Feel feverish pang and fainting chill,
Whose eye can stare in stony trance,
Whose hair can rouse like warrior's lance,—
'Tis hard for such to view, unfurl'd,
The curtain of the future world.
Yet, witness every quaking limb,
My sunken pulse, my eyeballs dim,
My soul with harrowing anguish torn,—
This for my Chieftain have I borne!—
The shapes that sought my fearful couch,
A human tongue may ne'er avouch;
No mortal man,—save he, who, bred
Between the living and the dead,
Is gifted beyond nature's law,—
Had e'er survived to say he saw.
At length the fatal answer came,
In characters of living flame!
Not spoke in word, nor blazed in scroll,
But borne and branded on my soul;—
WHICH SPILLS THE FOREMOST FOEMAN'S LIFE,
THAT PARTY CONQUERS IN THE STRIFE."—*

† Quartered.

VII.

"Thanks, Brian, for thy zeal and care
Good is thine augury, and fair.
Clan-Alpine ne'er in battle stood,
But first our broadswords tasted blood.
A surer victim still I know,
Self-offer'd to the auspicious blow:
A spy has sought my land this morn,—
No eve shall witness his return!
My followers guard each pass's mouth,
To east, to westward, and to south;
Red Murdoch, bribed to be his guide,
Has charge to lead his steps aside,
Till, in deep path or dingle brown,
He light on those shall bring him dow
—But see, who comes his news to sho
Malise! what tidings of the foe?"—

VIII.

"At Doune, o'er many a spear and glai
Two Barons proud their banners wave
I saw the Moray's silver star,
And mark'd the sable pale of Mar."—
"By Alpine's soul, high tidings those!
I love to hear of worthy foes. [nc
When move they on?"—"To-morro
Will see them here for battle boune."—
"Then shall it see a meeting stern!—
But, for the place—say, couldst thou le
Nought of the friendly clans of Earn?
Strengthen'd by them, we well might b
The battle on Benledi's side. [m
Thou couldst not?—well! Clan-Alpine
Shall man the Trosachs' shaggy glen;
Within Loch Katrine's gorge we'll figh
All in our maids' and matrons' sight,
Each for his hearth and household fire,
Father for child, and son for sire,—
Lover for maid beloved!—But why—
Is it the breeze affects mine eye?
Or dost thou come, ill-omen'd tear!
A messenger of doubt or fear?
No! sooner may the Saxon lance
Unfix Benledi from his stance,
Than doubt or terror can pierce throug
The unyielding heart of Roderick Dhu
'Tis stubborn as his trusty targe.—
Each to his post—all know their charg
The pibroch sounds, the bands advanc
The broadswords gleam, the bann
Obedient to the Chieftain's glance. [dan
—I turn me from the martial roar,
And seek Coir-Uriskin once more.

IX.

Where is the Douglas?—he is gone;
And Ellen sits on the grey stone
Fast by the cave, and makes her moan
While vainly Allan's words of cheer
Are pour'd on her unheeding ear.—

† *For battle boune*—ready for battle.

"He will return—Dear lady, trust!—
With joy return;—he will—he must.
Well was it time to seek, afar,
Some refuge from impending war,
When e'en Clan-Alpine's rugged swarm
Are cow'd by the approaching storm.
I saw their boats, with many a light,
Floating the livelong yesternight,
Shifting like flashes darted forth
By the red streamers of the north;
I mark'd at morn how close they ride,
Thick moor'd by the lone islet's side,
Like wild-ducks couching in the fen,
When stoops the hawk upon the glen.
Since this rude race dare not abide
The peril on the mainland side,
Shall not thy noble father's care
Some safe retreat for thee prepare?"—

X.

ELLEN.

"No, Allan, no! Pretext so kind
My wakeful terrors could not blind.
When in such tender tone, yet grave,
Douglas a parting blessing gave,
The tear that glisten'd in his eye
Drown'd not his purpose fix'd on high.
My soul, though feminine and weak,
Can image his; e'en as the lake,
Itself disturb'd by slightest stroke,
Reflects the invulnerable rock.
He hears report of battle rife,
He deems himself the cause of strife.
I saw him redden, when the theme
Turn'd, Allan, on thine idle dream
Of Malcolm Græme in fetters bound,
Which I, thou saidst, about him wound.
Think'st thou he trow'd thine omen aught?
Oh no! 'twas apprehensive thought
For the kind youth,—for Roderick too
(Let me be just)—that friend so true;
In danger both, and in our cause!
Minstrel, the Douglas dare not pause.
Why else that solemn warning given,
'If not on earth, we meet in heaven'?
Why else, to Cambus-kenneth's fane,
If eve return him not again,
Am I to hie, and make me known?
Alas! he goes to Scotland's throne,
Buys his friend's safety with his own;—
He goes to do—what I had done,
Had Douglas' daughter been his son!"—

XI.

"Nay, lovely Ellen!—dearest, nay!
If aught should his return delay,
He only named yon holy fane
As fitting place to meet again.
Be sure he 's safe; and for the Græme,—
Heaven's blessing on his gallant name!—
My vision'd sight may yet prove true,
Nor bode of ill to him or you.
When did my gifted dream beguile?
Think of the stranger at the isle,
And think upon the harpings slow,
That presaged this approaching woe!
Sooth was my prophecy of fear;
Believe it when it augurs cheer.
Would we had left this dismal spot!
Ill luck still haunts a fairy grot.
Of such a wondrous tale I know—
Dear lady, change that look of woe,
My heart was wont thy grief to cheer."—

ELLEN.

"Well, be it as thou wilt; I hear,
But cannot stop the bursting tear."
The Minstrel tried his simple art,
But distant far was Ellen's heart.

XII.

BALLAD.

Alice Brand.

Merry it is in the good greenwood,
When the mavis† and merle‡ are singing,
When the deer sweeps by, and the hounds are in cry,
And the hunter's horn is ringing.

"O Alice Brand, my native land
Is lost for love of you;
And we must hold by wood and wold,
As outlaws wont to do.

"O Alice, 'twas all for thy locks so bright,
And 'twas all for thine eyes so blue,
That on the night of our luckless flight,
Thy brother bold I slew.

"Now must I teach to hew the beech
The hand that held the glaive,
For leaves to spread our lowly bed,
And stakes to fence our cave.

"And for vest of pall, thy fingers small,
That wont on harp to stray,
A cloak must sheer from the slaughter'd deer,
To keep the cold away."

"O Richard! if my brother died,
'Twas but a fatal chance;
For darkling was the battle tried,
And fortune sped the lance.

"If pall and vair no more I wear,
Nor thou the crimson sheen,
As warm, we 'll say, is the russet grey,
As gay the forest green.

"And, Richard, if our lot be hard,
And lost thy native land,
Still Alice has her own Richard,
And he his Alice Brand."

† Thrush. ‡ Blackbir

XIII.

BALLAD CONTINUED.

'Tis merry, 'tis merry, in good greenwood,
So blithe Lady Alice is singing;
On the beech's pride, and oak's brown side,
Lord Richard's axe is ringing.

Up spoke the moody Elfin King,
Who wonn'd within the hill,—
Like wind in the porch of a ruin'd church,
His voice was ghostly shrill.

"Why sounds yon stroke on beech and oak,
Our moonlight circle's screen?
Or who comes here to chase the deer,
Beloved of our Elfin Queen?*
Or who may dare on wold to wear
The fairies' fatal green?*

"Up, Urgan, up! to yon mortal hie,
For thou were christen'd man;*
For cross or sign thou wilt not fly,
For mutter'd word or ban.

"Lay on him the curse of the wither'd heart,
The curse of the sleepless eye;
Till he wish and pray that his life would part,
Nor yet find leave to die."

XIV.

BALLAD CONTINUED.

'Tis merry, 'tis merry, in good greenwood,
Though the birds have still'd their singing;
The evening blaze doth Alice raise,
And Richard is fagots bringing.

Up Urgan starts, that hideous dwarf
Before Lord Richard stands,
And, as he cross'd and bless'd himself,
"I fear not sign," quoth the grisly elf,
"That is made with bloody hands."

But out then spoke she, Alice Brand,
That woman void of fear,—
"And if there's blood upon his hand,
'Tis but the blood of deer."—

"Now loud thou liest, thou bold of mood!
It cleaves unto his hand,
The stain of thine own kindly blood,
The blood of Ethert Brand."

Then forward stepp'd she, Alice Brand,
And made the holy sign,—
"And if there's blood on Richard's hand,
A spotless hand is mine.

"And I conjure thee, Demon elf,
By Him whom Demons fear,
To show us whence thou art thyself,
And what thy errand here?"

XV.

BALLAD CONTINUED.

"'Tis merry, 'tis merry, in Fairy-land,
When fairy birds are singing,
When the court doth ride by their monarch's side,
With bit and bridle ringing:

"And gaily shines the Fairy-land—
But all is glistening show,
Like the idle gleam that December's beam
Can dart on ice and snow.

"And fading, like that varied gleam,
Is our inconstant shape,
Who now like knight and lady seem,
And now like dwarf and ape.

"It was between the night and day,
When the Fairy King has power,
That I sunk down in a sinful fray,
And, 'twixt life and death, was snatch'd away
To the joyless Elfin bower.

"But wist I of a woman bold,
Who thrice my brow durst sign,
I might regain my mortal mold,
As fair a form as thine."

She cross'd him once—she cross'd him twice—
That lady was so brave;
The fouler grew his goblin hue,
The darker grew the cave.

She cross'd him thrice, that lady bold;
He rose beneath her hand
The fairest knight on Scottish mold,
Her brother, Ethert Brand!

Merry it is in good greenwood,
When the mavis and merle are singing,
But merrier were they in Dunfermline grey,
When all the bells were ringing.

XVI.

Just as the minstrel sounds were staid,
A stranger climb'd the sleepy glade;
His martial step, his stately mien,
His hunting suit of Lincoln green,
His eagle glance, remembrance claims—
'Tis Snowdoun's Knight, 'tis James Fitz-James.
Ellen beheld as in a dream,
Then, starting, scarce suppress'd a scream:
"O stranger! in such hour of fear,
What evil hap has brought thee here?"—
"An evil hap how can it be,
That bids me look again on thee?
By promise bound, my former guide
Met me betimes this morning tide,
And marshall'd, over bank and bourne,
The happy path of my return."—
"The happy path!—what! said he nought
Of war, of battle to be fought,

Of guarded pass?"—"No, by my faith!
Nor saw I aught could augur scathe."—
"O haste thee, Allan, to the kern,
—Yonder his tartans I discern;
Learn thou his purpose, and conjure
That he will guide the stranger sure!—
What prompted thee, unhappy man?
The meanest serf in Roderick's clan
Had not been bribed by love or fear,
Unknown to him, to guide thee here."—

XVII.

"Sweet Ellen, dear my life must be,
Since it is worthy care from thee;
Yet life I hold but idle breath,
When love or honour's weigh'd with death.
Then let me profit by my chance,
And speak my purpose bold at once.
I come to bear thee from a wild,
Where ne'er before such blossom smiled;
By this soft hand to lead thee far
From frantic scenes of feud and war.
Near Bochastle my horses wait;
They bear us soon to Stirling gate.
I'll place thee in a lovely bower,
I'll guard thee like a tender flower"——
"O! hush, Sir Knight! 'twere female art,
To say I do not read thy heart;
Too much, before, my selfish ear
Was idly soothed my praise to hear.
That fatal bait hath lured thee back,
In deathful hour, o'er dangerous track;
And how, O how, can I atone
The wreck my vanity brought on!—
One way remains—I'll tell him all—
Yes! struggling bosom, forth it shall!
Thou, whose light folly bears the blame,
Buy thine own pardon with thy shame!
But first—my father is a man
Outlaw'd and exiled, under ban;
The price of blood is on his head,
With me 'twere infamy to wed.— [truth!
Still wouldst thou speak?—then hear the
Fitz-James, there is a noble youth,—
If yet he is!—exposed for me
And mine to dread extremity—
Thou hast the secret of my heart;
Forgive, be generous, and depart!"

XVIII.

Fitz-James knew every wily train
A lady's fickle heart to gain;
But here he knew and felt them vain.
There shot no glance from Ellen's eye,
To give her steadfast speech the lie;
In maiden confidence she stood,
Though mantled in her cheek the blood,
And told her love with such a sigh
Of deep and hopeless agony,
As death had seal'd her Malcolm's doom,
And she sat sorrowing on his tomb.
Hope vanish'd from Fitz-James's eye,
But not with hope fled sympathy.
He proffer'd to attend her side,
As brother would a sister guide.—
"O! little know'st thou Roderick's heart
Safer for both we go apart.
O haste thee, and from Allan learn,
If thou mayst trust yon wily kern."
With hand upon his forehead laid,
The conflict of his mind to shade,
A parting step or two he made; [brain
Then, as some thought had cross'd h
He paused, and turn'd, and came again

XIX.

"Hear, lady, yet, a parting word!—
It chanced in fight that my poor sword
Preserved the life of Scotland's lord.
This ring the grateful Monarch gave,
And bade, when I had boon to crave,
To bring it back, and boldly claim
The recompense that I would name.
Ellen, I am no courtly lord,
But one who lives by lance and sword,
Whose castle is his helm and shield,
His lordship the embattled field.
What from a prince can I demand,
Who neither reck of state nor land?
Ellen, thy hand—the ring is thine;
Each guard and usher knows the sign.
Seek thou the King without delay;
This signet shall secure thy way;
And claim thy suit, whate'er it be,
As ransom of his pledge to me."
He placed the golden circlet on, [gon
Paused—kiss'd her hand—and then w
The aged Minstrel stood aghast,
So hastily Fitz-James shot past.
He join'd his guide, and wending down
The ridges of the mountain brown,
Across the stream they took their way,
That joins Loch Katrine to Achray.

XX.

All in the Trosachs' glen was still,
Noontide was sleeping on the hill:
Sudden his guide whoop'd loud and high
"Murdoch! was that a signal cry?"—
He stammer'd forth—"I shout to scare
Yon raven from his dainty fare."
He look'd—he knew the raven's prey,
His own brave steed:—"Ah! gallant gr
For thee—for me, perchance—'twere w
We ne'er had seen the Trosachs' dell.—
Murdoch, move first—but silently;
Whistle or whoop, and thou shalt die!
Jealous and sullen, on they fared,
Each silent, each upon his guard.

XXI.

Now wound the path its dizzy ledge
Around a precipice's edge,

When lo! a wasted female form,
Blighted by wrath of sun and storm,
In tatter'd weeds and wild array,
Stood on a cliff beside the way,
And glancing round her restless eye,
Upon the wood, the rock, the sky,
Seem'd nought to mark, yet all to spy.
Her brow was wreath'd with gaudy broom;
With gesture wild she waved a plume
Of feathers, which the eagles fling
To crag and cliff from dusky wing;
Such spoils her desperate step had sought,
Where scarce was footing for the goat.
The tartan plaid she first descried,
And shriek'd till all the rocks replied;
As loud she laugh'd when near they drew,
For then the Lowland garb she knew;
And then her hands she wildly wrung,
And then she wept, and then she sung—
She sung!—the voice, in better time,
Perchance to harp or lute might chime;
And now, though strain'd and roughen'd,
Rung wildly sweet to dale and hill. [still

XXII.

SONG.

"They bid me sleep, they bid me pray,
They say my brain is warp'd and wrung—
I cannot sleep on Highland brae,
I cannot pray in Highland tongue.
But were I now where Allan glides,
Or heard my native Devan's tides,
So sweetly would I rest, and pray
That Heaven would close my wintry day!

"'Twas thus my hair they bade me braid,
They made me to the church repair;
It was my bridal morn, they said,
And my true love would meet me there.
But woe betide the cruel guile,
That drown'd in blood the morning smile!
And woe betide the fairy dream!
I only waked to sob and scream."

XXIII.

"Who is this maid? what means her lay?
She hovers o'er the hollow way,
And flutters wide her mantle grey,
As the lone heron spreads his wing,
By twilight, o'er a haunted spring."—
"'Tis Blanche of Devan," Murdoch said,
"A crazed and captive Lowland maid,
Ta'en on the morn she was a bride,
When Roderick foray'd Devan-side;
The gay bridegroom resistance made,
And felt our Chief's unconquer'd blade.
I marvel she is now at large, [charge.
But oft she 'scapes from Maudlin's
Hence, brain-sick fool!"—He raised his bow:—
"Now, if thou strik'st her but one blow,
I'll pitch thee from the cliff as far
As ever peasant pitch'd a bar!"— [cried,
"Thanks, champion, thanks!" the Maniac
And press'd her to Fitz-James's side.
"See the grey pennons I prepare,
To seek my true-love through the air;
I will not lend that savage groom,
To break his fall, one downy plume!
No!—deep amid disjointed stones,
The wolves shall batten on his bones,
And then shall his detested plaid,
By bush and brier in mid air staid,
Wave forth a banner fair and free,
Meet signal for their revelry."—

XXIV.

"Hush thee, poor maiden, and be still!"—
"O! thou look'st kindly, and I will.—
Mine eye has dried and wasted been,
But still it loves the Lincoln green;
And, though mine ear is all unstrung,
Still, still it loves the Lowland tongue.

"For O my sweet William was forester true,
He stole poor Blanche's heart away!
His coat it was all of the greenwood hue,
And so blithely he trill'd the Lowland lay!

"It was not that I meant to tell . . .
But thou art wise, and guessest well."
Then, in a low and broken tone,
And hurried note, the song went on.
Still on the Clansman, fearfully,
She fix'd her apprehensive eye;
Then turn'd it on the Knight, and then
Her look glanced wildly o'er the glen.

XXV.

"The toils are pitch'd, and the stakes are set,
Ever sing merrily, merrily;
The bows they bend, and the knives they whet,
Hunters live so cheerily.

"It was a stag, a stag of ten,†
Bearing its branches sturdily;
He came stately down the glen,
Ever sing hardily, hardily.

"It was there he met with a wounded doe,
She was bleeding deathfully;
She warn'd him of the toils below,
O, so faithfully, faithfully!

"He had an eye, and he could heed,
Ever sing warily, warily;
He had a foot, and he could speed—
Hunters watch so narrowly."

† Having ten branches on his antlers.

XXVI.

Fitz-James's mind was passion-toss'd,
When Ellen's hints and fears were lost;
But Murdoch's shout suspicion wrought,
And Blanche's song conviction brought.—
Not like a stag that spies the snare,
But lion of the hunt aware,
He waved at once his blade on high,
"Disclose thy treachery, or die!"
Forth at full speed the Clansman flew,
But in his race his bow he drew.
The shaft just grazed Fitz-James's crest,
And thrill'd in Blanche's faded breast.—
Murdoch of Alpine! prove thy speed,
For ne'er had Alpine's son such need!
With heart of fire, and foot of wind,
The fierce avenger is behind!
Fate judges of the rapid strife—
The forfeit death—the prize is life!
Thy kindred ambush lies before,
Close couch'd upon the heathery moor;
Them couldst thou reach!—it may not be—
Thine ambush'd kin thou ne'er shalt see,
The fiery Saxon gains on thee!
—Resistless speeds the deadly thrust,
As lightning strikes the pine to dust!
With foot and hand Fitz-James must strain,
Ere he can win his blade again.
Bent o'er the fall'n, with falcon eye,
He grimly smiled to see him die;
Then slower wended back his way,
Where the poor maiden bleeding lay.

XXVII.

She sate beneath the birchen tree,
Her elbow resting on her knee;
She had withdrawn the fatal shaft,
And gazed on it, and feebly laugh'd;
Her wreath of broom and feathers grey,
Daggled with blood, beside her lay.
The Knight to stanch the life-stream tried,—
"Stranger, it is in vain!" she cried.
"This hour of death has given me more
Of reason's power than years before;
For, as these ebbing veins decay,
My frenzied visions fade away.
A helpless injured wretch I die,
And something tells me in thine eye,
That thou wert mine avenger born.—
Seest thou this tress?—O! still I've worn
This little tress of yellow hair,
Through danger, frenzy, and despair!
It once was bright and clear as thine,
But blood and tears have dimm'd its shine.
I will not tell thee when 'twas shred,
Nor from what guiltless victim's head—
My brain would turn!—but it shall wave
Like plumage on thy helmet brave,
Till sun and wind shall bleach the stain,
And thou wilt bring it me again.—
I waver still.—O God! more bright
Let reason beam her parting light!—
O! by thy knighthood's honour'd sign,
And for thy life preserved by mine,
When thou shalt see a darksome man,
Who boasts him Chief of Alpine's Clan,
With tartans broad and shadowy plume,
And hand of blood, and brow of gloom,
Be thy heart bold, thy weapon strong,
And wreak poor Blanche of Devan's wrong!—
They watch for thee by pass and fell . . .
Avoid the path . . . O God! . . . . farewell."

XXVIII.

A kindly heart had brave Fitz-James;
Fast pour'd his eyes at pity's claims,
And now, with mingled grief and ire,
He saw the murder'd maid expire.
"God, in my need, be my relief,
As I wreak this on yonder Chief!"
A lock from Blanche's tresses fair
He blended with her bridegroom's hair;
The mingled braid in blood he dyed,
And placed it on his bonnet-side:
"By Him whose word is truth! I swear,
No other favour will I wear,
Till this sad token I imbrue
In the best blood of Roderick Dhu!
But hark! what means yon faint halloo?
The chase is up,—but they shall know,
The stag at bay 's a dangerous foe."
Barr'd from the known but guarded way,
Through copse and cliffs Fitz-James must stray,
And oft must change his desperate track,
By stream and precipice turn'd back.
Heartless, fatigued, and faint, at length,
From lack of food and loss of strength,
He couch'd him in a thicket hoar,
And thought his toils and perils o'er:—
"Of all my rash adventures past,
This frantic feat must prove the last!
Who e'er so mad but might have guess'd,
That all this Highland hornet's nest
Would muster up in swarms so soon
As e'er they heard of bands at Doune?—
Like bloodhounds now they search me out,—
Hark to the whistle and the shout!—
If farther through the wilds I go,
I only fall upon the foe:
I'll couch me here till evening grey,
Then darkling try my dangerous way."

XXIX.

The shades of eve come slowly down,
The woods are wrapt in deeper brown,
The owl awakens from her dell,
The fox is heard upon the fell;

Enough remains of glimmering light
To guide the wanderer's steps aright,
Yet not enough from far to show
His figure to the watchful foe.
With cautious step, and ear awake,
He climbs the crag and threads the brake;
And not the summer solstice, there,
Temper'd the midnight mountain air,
But every breeze that swept the wold
Benumb'd his drenchèd limbs with cold.
In dread, in danger, and alone, [known,
Famish'd and chill'd, through ways un-
Tangled and steep, he journey'd on;
Till, as a rock's huge point he turn'd,
A watch-fire close before him burn'd.

XXX.

Beside its embers red and clear,
Bask'd, in his plaid, a mountaineer;
And up he sprung with sword in hand,—
"Thy name and purpose? Saxon, stand!"— [quire?"
"A stranger."—"What dost thou re-
"Rest and a guide, and food and fire.
My life's beset, my path is lost, [frost."—
The gale has chill'd my limbs with
"Art thou a friend to Roderick?"—
"No."—
"Thou dar'st not call thyself a foe?"—
"I dare! to him and all the band
He brings to aid his murderous hand."—
"Bold words!—but, though the beast of
The privilege of chase may claim, [game
Though space and law the stag we lend,
Ere hound we slip, or bow we bend,
Who ever reck'd, where, how, or when
The prowling fox was trapp'd or slain?*
Thus treacherous scouts,—yet sure they
Who say thou cam'st a secret spy!" [lie,
"They do, by heaven!—Come Roderick
And of his clan the boldest two, [Dhu,
And let me but till morning rest,
I write the falsehood on their crest."—
"If by the blaze I mark aright,
Thou bear'st the belt and spur of Knight."—
"Then by these tokens mayst thou know
Each proud oppressor's mortal foe."—
"Enough, enough; sit down, and share
A soldier's couch, a soldier's fare."

XXXI.

He gave him of his Highland cheer,
The harden'd flesh of mountain deer;*
Dry fuel on the fire he laid,
And bade the Saxon share his plaid.
He tended him like welcome guest,
Then thus his farther speech address'd:—
"Stranger, I am to Roderick Dhu
A clansman born, a kinsman true;
Each word against his honour spoke,
Demands of me avenging stroke;
Yet more,—upon thy fate, 'tis said,
A mighty augury is laid.
It rests with me to wind my horn,—
Thou art with numbers overborne;
It rests with me, here, brand to brand,
Worn as thou art, to bid thee stand:
But, not for clan, nor kindred's cause,
Will I depart from honour's laws;
To assail a wearied man were shame,
And stranger is a holy name;
Guidance and rest, and food and fire,
In vain he never must require.
Then rest thee here till dawn of day;
Myself will guide thee on the way, [ward,
O'er stock and stone, through watch and
Till past Clan-Alpine's utmost guard,
As far as Coilantogle's ford;
From thence thy warrant is thy sword."—
"I take thy courtesy, by heaven,
As freely as 'tis nobly given!"—
"Well, rest thee; for the bittern's cry
Sings us the lake's wild lullaby."
With that he shook the gather'd heath,
And spread his plaid upon the wreath;
And the brave foemen, side by side,
Lay peaceful down, like brothers tried,
And slept until the dawning beam
Purpled the mountain and the stream.

CANTO FIFTH.

THE COMBAT.

I.

FAIR as the earliest beam of eastern light,
When first, by the bewilder'd pilgrim spied,
It smiles upon the dreary brow of night,
And silvers o'er the torrent's foaming tide, [side;—
And lights the fearful path on mountain
Fair as that beam, although the fairest far,
Giving to horror grace, to danger pride,
Shine martial Faith, and Courtesy's bright star,
Through all the wreckful storms that cloud the brow of War.

II.

That early beam, so fair and sheen,
Was twinkling through the hazel screen,
When, rousing at its glimmer red,
The warriors left their lowly bed,
Look'd out upon the dappled sky,
Mutter'd their soldier matins by,
And then awaked their fire, to steal,
As short and rude, their soldier meal.
That o'er, the Gael† around him threw
His graceful plaid of varied hue,

† The Scottish Highlander calls himself *Gael*, or Gaul, and terms the Lowlanders *Sassenach*, or Saxons.

And, true to promise, led the way,
By thicket green and mountain grey.
A wildering path!—they winded now
Along the precipice's brow,
Commanding the rich scenes beneath,
The windings of the Forth and Teith,
And all the vales beneath that lie,
Till Stirling's turrets melt in sky;
Then, sunk in copse, their farthest glance
Gain'd not the length of horseman's lance.
'Twas oft so steep, the foot was fain
Assistance from the hand to gain;
So tangled oft, that, bursting through,
Each hawthorn shed her showers of dew,—
That diamond dew, so pure and clear,
It rivals all but Beauty's tear.

III.

At length they came where, stern and steep,
The hill sinks down upon the deep.
Here Vennachar in silver flows,
There, ridge on ridge, Benledi rose;
Ever the hollow path twined on,
Beneath steep bank and threatening stone;
A hundred men might hold the post
With hardihood against a host.
The rugged mountain's scanty cloak
Was dwarfish shrubs of birch and oak,
With shingles bare, and cliffs between,
And patches bright of bracken green,
And heather black, that waved so high,
It held the copse in rivalry.
But where the lake slept deep and still,
Dank osiers fringed the swamp and hill;
And oft both path and hill were torn,
Where wintry torrents down had borne,
And heap'd upon the cumber'd land
Its wreck of gravel, rocks, and sand.
So toilsome was the road to trace,
The guide, abating of his pace,
Led slowly through the pass's jaws,
And ask'd Fitz-James, by what strange cause
He sought these wilds, traversed by few,
Without a pass from Roderick Dhu?

IV.

"Brave Gael, my pass in danger tried,
Hangs in my belt, and by my side;
Yet, sooth to tell," the Saxon said,
"I dreamt not now to claim its aid.
When here, but three days since, I came,
Bewilder'd in pursuit of game,
All seem'd as peaceful and as still
As the mist slumbering on yon hill;
Thy dangerous Chief was then afar,
Nor soon expected back from war.
Thus said, at least, my mountain-guide,
Though deep, perchance, the villain lied."—
"Yet why a second venture try?"
"A warrior thou, and ask me why!—
Moves our free course by such fix'd cause
As gives the poor mechanic laws?
Enough, I sought to drive away
The lazy hours of peaceful day;
Slight cause will then suffice to guide
A Knight's free footsteps far and wide,—
A falcon flown, a greyhound stray'd,
The merry glance of mountain maid:
Or, if a path be dangerous known,
The danger's self is lure alone."—

V.

"Thy secret keep, I urge thee not;—
Yet, ere again ye sought this spot,
Say, heard ye nought of Lowland war,
Against Clan-Alpine, raised by Mar?"
—"No, by my word;—of bands prepared
To guard King James's sports I heard;
Nor doubt I aught, but, when they hear
This muster of the mountaineer,
Their pennons will abroad be flung,
Which else in Doune had peaceful hung."—
"Free be they flung!—for we were loth
Their silken folds should feast the moth.
Free be they flung!—as free shall wave
Clan-Alpine's pine in banner brave.
But, Stranger, peaceful since you came,
Bewilder'd in the mountain game,
Whence the bold boast by which you show
Vich-Alpine's vow'd and mortal foe?"—
"Warrior, but yester-morn, I knew
Nought of thy Chieftain, Roderick Dhu,
Save as an outlaw'd desperate man,
The chief of a rebellious clan,
Who, in the Regent's court and sight,
With ruffian dagger stabb'd a knight:
Yet this alone might from his part
Sever each true and loyal heart."

VI.

Wrathful at such arraignment foul,
Dark lower'd the clansman's sable scowl.
A space he paused, then sternly said,
"And heard'st thou why he drew his blade?
Heard'st thou that shameful word and blow
Brought Roderick's vengeance on his foe?
What reck'd the Chieftain if he stood
On Highland heath, or Holy-Rood?
He rights such wrong where it is given,
If it were in the court of heaven."—
"Still was it outrage;—yet, 'tis true,
Not then claim'd sovereignty his due;
While Albany, with feeble hand,
Held borrow'd truncheon of command,*
The young King, mew'd in Stirling tower,
Was stranger to respect and power.
But then, thy Chieftain's robber life!—
Winning mean prey by causeless strife,
Wrenching from ruin'd Lowland swain
His herds and harvest rear'd in vain,—

Methinks a soul, like thine, should scorn
The spoils from such foul foray borne."

VII.

The Gael beheld him grim the while,
And answer'd with disdainful smile,—
"Saxon, from yonder mountain high,
I mark'd thee send delighted eye,
Far to the south and east, where lay,
Extended in succession gay,
Deep waving fields and pastures green,
With gentle slopes and groves between:—
These fertile plains, that soften'd vale,
Were once the birthright of the Gael;
The stranger came with iron hand,
And from our fathers reft the land.
Where dwell we now? See, rudely swell
Crag over crag, and fell o'er fell.
Ask we this savage hill we tread,
For fatten'd steer or household bread;
Ask we for flocks these shingles dry,
And well the mountain might reply,—
'To you, as to your sires of yore,
Belong the target and claymore!
I give you shelter in my breast,
Your own good blades must win the rest.'
Pent in this fortress of the North,
Think'st thou we will not sally forth,
To spoil the spoiler as we may,
And from the robber rend the prey?
Ay, by my soul!—While on yon plain
The Saxon rears one shock of grain;
While, of ten thousand herds, there strays
But one along yon river's maze,—
The Gael, of plain and river heir,
Shall, with strong hand, redeem his share.
Where live the mountain Chiefs who hold,
That plundering Lowland field and fold
Is aught but retribution true?
Seek other cause 'gainst Roderick Dhu."—

VIII.

Answer'd Fitz-James,—"And, if I sought,
Think'st thou no other could be brought?
What deem ye of my path waylaid?
My life given o'er to ambuscade?"—
"As of a meed to rashness due:
Hadst thou sent warning fair and true,—
I seek my hound, or falcon stray'd,
I seek, good faith, a Highland maid,—
Free hadst thou been to come and go;
But secret path marks secret foe.
Nor yet, for this, even as a spy,
Hadst thou, unheard, been doom'd to die,
Save to fulfil an augury."—
"Well, let it pass; nor will I now
Fresh cause of enmity avow,
To chafe thy mood and cloud thy brow.
Enough, I am by promise tied
To match me with this man of pride:
Twice have I sought Clan-Alpine's glen
In peace; but when I come agen,
I come with banner, brand, and bow,
As leader seeks his mortal foe.
For love-lorn swain, in lady's bower,
Ne'er panted for the appointed hour,
As I, until before me stand
This rebel Chieftain and his band!"

IX.

"Have, then, thy wish!"—he whistled
And he was answer'd from the hill; [shrill,
Wild as the scream of the curlew,
From crag to crag the signal flew.
Instant, through copse and heath, arose
Bonnets and spears and bended bows;
On right, on left, above, below,
Sprung up at once the lurking foe;
From shingles grey their lances start,
The bracken bush sends forth the dart,
The rushes and the willow-wand
Are bristling into axe and brand,
And every tuft of broom gives life
To plaided warriors arm'd for strife.
That whistle garrison'd the glen
At once with full five hundred men,
As if the yawning hill to heaven
A subterranean host had given.
Watching their leader's beck and will,
All silent there they stood, and still,
Like the loose crags, whose threatening mass
Lay tottering o'er the hollow pass,
As if an infant's touch could urge
Their headlong passage down the verge,
With step and weapon forward flung,
Upon the mountain-side they hung.
The Mountaineer cast glance of pride
Along Benledi's living side,
Then fix'd his eye and sable brow
Full on Fitz-James—"How say'st thou now?
These are Clan-Alpine's warriors true;
And, Saxon,—I am Roderick Dhu!"

X.

Fitz-James was brave:—Though to his heart
The life-blood thrill'd with sudden start,
He mann'd himself with dauntless air,
Return'd the Chief his haughty stare,
His back against a rock he bore,
And firmly placed his foot before:—
"Come one, come all! this rock shall fly
From its firm base as soon as I."
Sir Roderick mark'd—and in his eyes
Respect was mingled with surprise,
And the stern joy which warriors feel
In foemen worthy of their steel. [hand:
Short pace he stood—then waved his
Down sunk the disappearing band;
Each warrior vanish'd where he stood,
In broom or bracken, heath or wood;
Sunk brand and spear and bended bow,
In osiers pale and copses low;

It seem'd as if their mother Earth
Had swallow'd up her warlike birth.
The wind's last breath had toss'd in air,
Pennon, and plaid, and plumage fair,—
The next but swept a lone hill-side,
Where heath and fern were waving wide;
The sun's last glance was glinted back
From spear and glaive, from targe and jack,—
The next, all unreflected, shone
On bracken green, and cold grey stone.

XI.

Fitz-James look'd round—yet scarce believed
The witness that his sight received;
Such apparition well might seem
Delusion of a dreadful dream.
Sir Roderick in suspense he eyed,
And to his look the Chief replied,
"Fear nought—nay, that I need not say—
But—doubt not aught from mine array.
Thou art my guest;—I pledged my word
As far as Coilantogle ford:
Nor would I call a clansman's brand
For aid against one valiant hand,
Though on our strife lay every vale
Rent by the Saxon from the Gael.
So move we on;—I only meant
To show the reed on which you leant,
Deeming this path you might pursue
Without a pass from Roderick Dhu."*
They moved:—I said Fitz-James was
As ever knight that belted glaive; [brave,
Yet dare not say, that now his blood
Kept on its wont and temper'd flood,
As, following Roderick's stride, he drew
That seeming lonesome pathway through,
Which yet, by fearful proof, was rife
With lances, that, to take his life,
Waited but signal from a guide,
So late dishonour'd and defied.
Ever, by stealth, his eye sought round
The vanish'd guardians of the ground,
And still, from copse and heather deep,
Fancy saw spear and broadsword peep,
And in the plover's shrilly strain,
The signal whistle heard again.
Nor breathed he free till far behind
The pass was left; for then they wind
Along a wide and level green,
Where neither tree nor tuft was seen,
Nor rush nor bush of broom was near,
To hide a bonnet or a spear.

XII.

The Chief in silence strode before,
And reach'd that torrent's sounding shore,
Which, daughter of three mighty lakes,
From Vennachar in silver breaks,
Sweeps through the plain, and ceaseless mines
On Bochastle the mouldering lines,
Where Rome, the Empress of the world,
Of yore her eagle wings unfurl'd.*
And here his course the Chieftain staid,
Threw down his target and his plaid,
And to the Lowland warrior said—
"Bold Saxon! to his promise just,
Vich-Alpine has discharged his trust.
This murderous Chief, this ruthless man,
This head of a rebellious clan,
Hath led thee safe through watch and ward,
Far past Clan-Alpine's outmost guard.
Now, man to man, and steel to steel,
A Chieftain's vengeance thou shalt feel.
See here, all vantageless I stand,
Arm'd, like thyself, with single brand:*
For this is Coilantogle ford,
And thou must keep thee with thy sword."

XIII.

The Saxon paused:—"I ne'er delay'd,
When foeman bade me draw my blade;
Nay, more, brave Chief, I vow'd thy death:
Yet sure thy fair and generous faith,
And my deep debt for life preserved,
A better meed have well deserved:
Can nought but blood our feud atone?
Are there no means?"—"No, Stranger, none!
And hear,—to fire thy flagging zeal,—
The Saxon cause rests on thy steel;
For thus spoke Fate, by prophet bred
Between the living and the dead:
'Who spills the foremost foeman's life,
His party conquers in the strife.'"—
"Then, by my word," the Saxon said,
"The riddle is already read.
Seek yonder brake beneath the cliff,—
There lies Red Murdoch, stark and stiff.
Thus Fate has solved her prophecy,
Then yield to Fate, and not to me.
To James, at Stirling, let us go,
When, if thou wilt be still his foe,
Or if the King shall not agree
To grant thee grace and favour free,
I plight mine honour, oath, and word,
That, to thy native strengths restored,
With each advantage shalt thou stand,
That aids thee now to guard thy land."

XIV.

Dark lightning flash'd from Roderick's eye—
"Soars thy presumption, then, so high,
Because a wretched kern ye slew,
Homage to name to Roderick Dhu?
He yields not, he, to man nor Fate!
Thou add'st but fuel to my hate:—
My clansman's blood demands revenge.
Not yet prepared?—By heaven, I change
My thought, and hold thy valour light
As that of some vain carpet knight,

Who ill deserved my courteous care,
And whose best boast is but to wear
A braid of his fair lady's hair."—
"I thank thee, Roderick, for the word!
It nerves my heart, it steels my sword;
For I have sworn this braid to stain
In the best blood that warms thy vein.
Now, truce, farewell! and, ruth, begone!—
Yet think not that by thee alone,
Proud Chief! can courtesy be shown;
Though not from copse, or heath, or cairn,
Start at my whistle clansmen stern,
Of this small horn one feeble blast
Would fearful odds against thee cast.
But fear not—doubt not—which thou
We try this quarrel hilt to hilt." [wilt—
Then each at once his falchion drew,
Each on the ground his scabbard threw,
Each look'd to sun, and stream, and plain,
As what they ne'er might see again;
Then foot, and point, and eye opposed,
In dubious strife they darkly closed.

XV.

Ill fared it then with Roderick Dhu,
That on the field his targe he threw,*
Whose brazen studs and tough bull-hide
Had death so often dash'd aside;
For, train'd abroad his arms to wield,
Fitz-James's blade was sword and shield.
He practised every pass and ward,
To thrust, to strike, to feint, to guard;
While less expert, though stronger far,
The Gael maintained unequal war.
Three times in closing strife they stood,
And thrice the Saxon blade drank blood;
No stinted draught, no scanty tide,
The gushing flood the tartans dyed.
Fierce Roderick felt the fatal drain,
And shower'd his blows like wintry rain;
And, as firm rock, or castle-roof,
Against the winter shower is proof,
The foe, invulnerable still,
Foil'd his wild rage by steady skill;
Till, at advantage ta'en, his brand
Forced Roderick's weapon from his hand,
And backward borne upon the lea,
Brought the proud Chieftain to his knee.

XVI.

"Now, yield thee, or by Him who made
The world, thy heart's blood dyes my
blade!"—
"Thy threats, thy mercy, I defy!
Let recreant yield, who fears to die."
—Like adder darting from his coil,
Like wolf that dashes through the toil,
Like mountain-cat who guards her young,
Full at Fitz-James's throat he sprung;
Receiv'd, but reck'd not of a wound,
And locked his arms his foeman round.—
Now, gallant Saxon, hold thine own!
No maiden's hand is round thee thrown!
That desperate grasp thy frame might feel,
Through bars of brass and triple steel!—
They tug, they strain! down, down they go,
The Gael above, Fitz-James below.
The Chieftain's gripe his throat com-
press'd,
His knee was planted on his breast;
His clotted locks he backward threw,
Across his brow his hand he drew,
From blood and mist to clear his sight,
Then gleam'd aloft his dagger bright!—
—But hate and fury ill supplied
The stream of life's exhausted tide,
And all too late the advantage came,
To turn the odds of deadly game;
For, while the dagger gleam'd on high,
Reel'd soul and sense, reel'd brain and
eye,
Down came the blow! but in the heath
The erring blade found bloodless sheath.
The struggling foe may now unclasp
The fainting Chief's relaxing grasp;
Unwounded from the dreadful close,
But breathless all, Fitz-James arose.

XVII.

He falter'd thanks to Heaven for life,
Redeem'd, unhoped, from desperate strife;
Next on his foe his look he cast,
Whose every gasp appear'd his last;
In Roderick's gore he dipp'd the braid,—
"Poor Blanche! thy wrongs are dearly
Yet with thy foe must die, or live, [paid:
The praise that faith and valour give."
With that he blew a bugle note,
Undid the collar from his throat,
Unbonneted, and by the wave
Sate down his brow and hands to lave.
Then faint afar are heard the feet
Of rushing steeds in gallop fleet;
The sounds increase, and now are seen
Four mounted squires in Lincoln green;
Two who bear lance, and two who lead,
By loosen'd rein, a saddled steed;
Each onward held his headlong course,
And by Fitz-James rein'd up his horse,—
With wonder view'd the bloody spot—
—"Exclaim not, gallants! question not.—
You, Herbert and Luffness, alight,
And bind the wounds of yonder knight;
Let the grey palfrey bear his weight,
We destined for a fairer freight,
And bring him on to Stirling straight;
I will before at better speed,
To seek fresh horse and fitting weed.
The sun rides high;—I must be boune
To see the archer game at noon;
But lightly Bayard clears the lea.—
De Vaux and Herries, follow me.

XVIII.

Stand, Bayard, stand!"—the steed obey'd,
With arching neck and bended head,
And glancing eye and quivering ear,
As if he loved his lord to hear.
No foot Fitz-James in stirrup staid,
No grasp upon the saddle laid,
But wreathed his left hand in the mane,
And lightly bounded from the plain;
Turn'd on the horse his armèd heel,
And stirr'd his courage with the steel.
Bounded the fiery steed in air,
The rider sate erect and fair,
Then like a bolt from steel crossbow
Forth launch'd, along the plain they go.
They dash'd that rapid torrent through,
And up Carhonie's hill they flew;
Still at the gallop prick'd the Knight,
His merry-men follow'd as they might.
Along thy banks, swift Teith! they ride,
And in the race they mock thy tide;
Strong Lendrick now are past,
And Deanstown lies behind them cast;
They rise, the banner'd towers of Doune,
They sink in distant woodland soon;
Blair-Drummond sees the hoofs strike fire,
They sweep like breeze through Ochtertyre;
They mark just glance and disappear
The lofty brow of ancient Kier;
They bathe their coursers' sweltering sides,
Dark Forth! amid thy sluggish tides,
And on the opposing shore take ground,
With plash, with scramble, and with bound. [Forth!
Right-hand they leave thy cliffs, Craig-
And soon the bulwark of the North,
Grey Stirling, with her towers and town,
Upon their fleet career look'd down.

XIX.

As up the flinty path they strain'd,
Sudden his steed the leader rein'd;
A signal to his squire he flung,
Who instant to his stirrup sprung:—
"Seest thou, De Vaux, yon woodsman grey,
Who town-ward holds the rocky way,
Of stature tall and poor array?
Mark'st thou the firm, yet active stride,
With which he scales the mountain-side?
Know'st thou from whence he comes, or whom?"—
"No, by my word;—a burly groom
He seems, who in the field or chase
A baron's train would nobly grace."—
"Out, out, De Vaux! can fear supply,
And jealousy, no sharper eye?
Afar, ere to the hill he drew,
That stately form and step I knew;
Like form in Scotland is not seen,
Treads not such step on Scottish green.
'Tis James of Douglas, by Saint Serle!
The uncle of the banished Earl.
Away, away, to court, to show
The near approach of dreaded foe:
The King must stand upon his guard;
Douglas and he must meet prepared."
Then right-hand wheel'd their steeds, and straight
They won the castle's postern gate.

XX.

The Douglas, who had bent his way
From Cambus-Kenneth's abbey grey,
Now, as he climb'd the rocky shelf,
Held sad communion with himself:—
"Yes, all is true my fears could frame.
A prisoner lies the noble Græme,
And fiery Roderick soon will feel
The vengeance of the royal steel.
I, only I, can ward their fate,—
God grant the ransom come not late!
The Abbess hath her promise given,
My child shall be the bride of Heaven;—
—Be pardon'd one repining tear!
For He, who gave her, knows how dear,
How excellent! but that is by,
And now my business is—to die.
—Ye towers! within whose circuit dread
A Douglas by his sovereign bled;
And thou, O sad and fatal mound!
That oft hast heard the death-axe sound,
As on the noblest of the land
Fell the stern headsman's bloody hand,—
The dungeon, block, and nameless tomb
Prepare—for Douglas seeks his doom!
—But hark! what blithe and jolly peal
Makes the Franciscan steeple reel?
And see! upon the crowded street,
In motley groups what masquers meet!
Banner and pageant, pipe and drum,
And merry morrice-dancers come.
I guess, by all this quaint array,
The burghers hold their sports to-day.*
James will be there; he loves such show,
Where the good yeoman bends his bow,
And the tough wrestler foils his foe,
As well as where, in proud career,
The high-born tilter shivers spear.
I'll follow to the Castle-park, [mark,
And play my prize;—King James shall
If age has tamed these sinews stark,
Whose force so oft, in happier days,
His boyish wonder loved to praise."

XXI.

The Castle gates were open flung,
The quivering drawbridge rock'd and rung,
And echo'd loud the flinty street
Beneath the coursers' clattering feet,

As slowly down the steep descent
Fair Scotland's King and nobles went,
While all along the crowded way
Was jubilee and loud huzza.
And ever James was bending low,
To his white jennet's saddle-bow,
Doffing his cap to city dame, [shame.
Who smiled and blush'd for pride and
And well the simperer might be vain—
He chose the fairest of the train.
Gravely he greets each city sire,
Commends each pageant's quaint attire,
Gives to the dancers thanks aloud,
And smiles and nods upon the crowd,
Who rend the heavens with their acclaims,
"Long live the Commons' King, King James!"
Behind the King throng'd peer and knight,
And noble dame and damsel bright,
Whose fiery steeds ill brook'd the stay
Of the steep street and crowded way.
—But in the train you might discern
Dark lowering brow and visage stern:
There nobles mourn'd their pride restrain'd,
And the mean burgher's joys disdain'd;
And chiefs, who, hostage for their clan,
Were each from home a banish'd man,
There thought upon their own grey tower,
Their waving woods, their feudal power,
And deem'd themselves a shameful part
Of pageant which they cursed in heart.

XXII.

Now, in the Castle-park, drew out
Their chequer'd bands the joyous rout.
There morricers, with bell at heel,
And blade in hand, their mazes wheel;
But chief, beside the butts, there stand
Bold Robin Hood* and all his band,—
Friar Tuck with quarterstaff and cowl,
Old Scathelock with his surly scowl,
Maid Marion, fair as ivory bone,
Scarlet, and Mutch, and Little John;
Their bugles challenge all that will,
In archery to prove their skill.
The Douglas bent a bow of might,—
His first shaft centred in the white,
And when in turn he shot again,
His second split the first in twain.
From the King's hand must Douglas take
A silver dart, the archer's stake;
Fondly he watch'd, with watery eye,
Some answering glance of sympathy,—
No kind emotion made reply!
Indifferent as to archer wight,
The Monarch gave the arrow bright.

XXIII.

Now, clear the ring! for, hand to hand,
The manly wrestlers take their stand.

Two o'er the rest superior rose,
And proud demanded mightier foes,
Nor call'd in vain; for Douglas came.
—For life is Hugh of Larbert lame;
Scarce better John of Alloa's fare,
Whom senseless home his comrades bear.
Prize of the wrestling match, the King
To Douglas gave a golden ring,*
While coldly glanced his eye of blue,
As frozen drop of wintry dew.
Douglas would speak, but in his breast
His struggling soul his words suppress'd;
Indignant then he turn'd him where
Their arms the brawny yeomen bare,
To hurl the massive bar in air.
When each his utmost strength had shown,
The Douglas rent an earth-fast stone
From its deep bed, then heaved it high,
And sent the fragment through the sky,
A rood beyond the farthest mark;
And still in Stirling's royal park,
The grey-hair'd sires, who know the past,
To strangers point the Douglas cast,
And moralise on the decay
Of Scottish strength in modern day.

XXIV.

The vale with loud applauses rang,
The Ladies' Rock sent back the clang.
The King, with look unmoved, bestow'd
A purse well fill'd with pieces broad.
Indignant smiled the Douglas proud,
And threw the gold among the crowd,
Who now, with anxious wonder, scan,
And sharper glance, the dark grey man;
Till whispers rose among the throng,
That heart so free, and hand so strong,
Must to the Douglas blood belong;
The old men mark'd, and shook the head,
To see his hair with silver spread,
And wink'd aside, and told each son,
Of feats upon the English done,
Ere Douglas of the stalwart hand
Was exiled from his native land.
The women praised his stately form,
Though wreck'd by many a winter's storm;
The youth with awe and wonder saw
His strength surpassing Nature's law.
Thus judged, as is their wont, the crowd,
Till murmur rose to clamours loud.
But not a glance from that proud ring
Of peers who circled round the King,
With Douglas held communion kind,
Or call'd the banish'd man to mind;
No, not from those who, at the chase,
Once held his side the honour'd place,
Begirt his board, and, in the field,
Found safety underneath his shield;
For he, whom royal eyes disown,
When was his form to courtiers known?

XXV.

The Monarch saw the gambols flag,
And bade let loose a gallant stag,
Whose pride, the holiday to crown, [down,
Two favourite greyhounds should pull
That venison free, and Bordeaux wine,
Might serve the archery to dine.
But Lufra,—whom from Douglas' side
Nor bribe nor threat could e'er divide,
The fleetest hound in all the North,—
Brave Lufra saw, and darted forth.
She left the royal hounds mid-way,
And dashing on the antler'd prey,
Sunk her sharp muzzle in his flank,
And deep the flowing life-blood drank.
The King's stout huntsman saw the sport
By strange intruder broken short,
Came up, and with his leash unbound,
In anger struck the noble hound.
—The Douglas had endured, that morn,
The King's cold look, the nobles' scorn,
And last, and worst to spirit proud,
Had borne the pity of the crowd;
But Lufra had been fondly bred,
To share his board, to watch his bed,
And oft would Ellen Lufra's neck
In maiden glee with garlands deck;
They were such playmates, that with name
Of Lufra, Ellen's image came.
His stifled wrath is brimming high,
In darken'd brow and flashing eye:
As waves before the bark divide,
The crowd gave way before his stride;
Needs but a buffet and no more,
The groom lies senseless in his gore.
Such blow no other hand could deal,
Though gauntleted in glove of steel.

XXVI.

Then clamour'd loud the royal train,
And brandish'd swords and staves amain.
But stern the Baron's warning—"Back!
Back, on your lives, ye menial pack!
Beware the Douglas.—Yes! behold,
King James! The Douglas, doom'd of old,
And vainly sought for near and far,
A victim to atone the war,
A willing victim now attends,
Nor craves thy grace but for his friends."—
"Thus is my clemency repaid?
Presumptuous Lord!" the Monarch said;
"Of thy misproud ambitious clan,
Thou, James of Bothwell, wert the man,
The only man, in whom a foe
My woman-mercy would not know:
But shall a Monarch's presence brook
Injurious blow, and haughty look?—
What ho! the Captain of our Guard!
Give the offender fitting ward.—
Break off the sports!"—for tumult rose,
And yeomen 'gan to bend their bows,—
"Break off the sports!" he said, and frown'd,
"And bid our horsemen clear the ground."

XXVII.

Then uproar wild and misarray
Marr'd the fair form of festal day.
The horsemen prick'd among the crowd,
Repell'd by threats and insult loud;
To earth are borne the old and weak,
The timorous fly, the women shriek;
With flint, with shaft, with staff, with bar,
The hardier urge tumultuous war.
At once round Douglas darkly sweep
The royal spears in circle deep,
And slowly scale the pathway steep;
While on the rear in thunder pour
The rabble with disorder'd roar.
With grief the noble Douglas saw
The Commons rise against the law,
And to the leading soldier said,—
"Sir John of Hyndford! 'twas my blade
That knighthood on thy shoulder laid;
For that good deed, permit me then
A word with these misguided men.—

XXVIII.

"Hear, gentle friends! ere yet for me
Ye break the bands of fealty.
My life, my honour, and my cause,
I tender free to Scotland's laws.
Are these so weak as must require
The aid of your misguided ire?
Or, if I suffer causeless wrong,
Is then my selfish rage so strong,
My sense of public weal so low,
That, for mean vengeance on a foe,
Those cords of love I should unbind,
Which knit my country and my kind?
Oh no! Believe, in yonder tower
It will not soothe my captive hour,
To know those spears our foes should dread,
For me in kindred gore are red;
To know, in fruitless brawl begun,
For me, that mother wails her son;
For me, that widow's mate expires;
For me, that orphans weep their sires;
That patriots mourn insulted laws,
And curse the Douglas for the cause.
O let your patience ward such ill,
And keep your right to love me still!"

XXIX.

The crowd's wild fury sunk again
In tears, as tempests melt in rain.
With lifted hands and eyes, they pray'd
For blessings on his generous head,
Who for his country felt alone,
And prized her blood beyond his own.
Old men, upon the verge of life,
Bless'd him who staid the civil strife;
And mothers held their babes on high,
The self-devoted Chief to spy,

Triumphant over wrongs and ire,
To whom the prattlers owed a sire:
Even the rough soldier's heart was moved;
As if behind some bier beloved,
With trailing arms and drooping head,
The Douglas up the hill he led,
And at the Castle's battled verge,
With sighs resign'd his honour'd charge.

XXX.

The offended Monarch rode apart,
With bitter thought and swelling heart,
And would not now vouchsafe again
Through Stirling streets to lead his train.—
"O Lennox, who would wish to rule
This changeling crowd, this common fool?
Hear'st thou," he said, "the loud acclaim,
With which they shout the Douglas name!
With like acclaim, the vulgar throat [note;
Strain'd for King James their morning
With like acclaim they hail'd the day
When first I broke the Douglas' sway;
And like acclaim would Douglas greet,
If he could hurl me from my seat.
Who o'er the herd would wish to reign,
Fantastic, fickle, fierce, and vain!
Vain as the leaf upon the stream,
And fickle as a changeful dream;
Fantastic as a woman's mood,
And fierce as Frenzy's fever'd blood.
Thou many-headed monster-thing,
O who would wish to be thy king!

XXXI.

"But soft! what messenger of speed
Spurs hitherward his panting steed?
I guess his cognizance afar—
What from our cousin, John of Mar?"—
"He prays, my liege, your sports keep bound
Within the safe and guarded ground:
For some foul purpose yet unknown,—
Most sure for evil to the throne,—
The outlaw'd Chieftain, Roderick Dhu,
Has summon'd his rebellious crew;
'Tis said, in James of Bothwell's aid
These loose banditti stand array'd.
The Earl of Mar, this morn, from Doune,
To break their muster march'd, and soon
Your grace will hear of battle fought;
But earnestly the Earl besought,
Till for such danger he provide,
With scanty train you will not ride."

XXXII.

"Thou warn'st me I have done amiss,—
I should have earlier look'd to this:
I lost it in this bustling day.
—Retrace with speed thy former way;
Spare not for spoiling of thy steed,
The best of mine shall be thy meed.
Say to our faithful Lord of Mar,
We do forbid the intended war:
Roderick, this morn, in single fight,
Was made our prisoner by a knight;
And Douglas hath himself and cause
Submitted to our kingdom's laws.
The tidings of their leaders lost
Will soon dissolve the mountain host,
Nor would we that the vulgar feel,
For their Chief's crimes, avenging steel.
Bear Mar our message, Braco: fly!"—
He turn'd his steed,—"My liege, I hie,—
Yet, ere I cross this lily lawn,
I fear the broadswords will be drawn."
The turf the flying courser spurn'd,
And to his towers the King return'd.

XXXIII.

Ill with King James's mood that day
Suited gay feast and minstrel lay;
Soon were dismiss'd the courtly throng,
And soon cut short the festal song.
Nor less upon the sadden'd town
The evening sunk in sorrow down.
The burghers spoke of civil jar,
Of rumour'd feuds and mountain war,
Of Moray, Mar, and Roderick Dhu,
All up in arms:—the Douglas too,
They mourn'd him pent within the hold,
"Where stout Earl William was of old"—
And there his word the speaker staid,
And finger on his lip he laid,
Or pointed to his dagger blade.
But jaded horsemen, from the west,
At evening to the Castle press'd;
And busy talkers said they bore
Tidings of fight on Katrine's shore;
At noon the deadly fray begun,
And lasted till the set of sun.
Thus giddy rumour shook the town,
Till closed the Night her pennons brown.

CANTO SIXTH.

THE GUARD-ROOM.

I.

THE sun, awakening, through the smoky air
Of the dark city casts a sullen glance,
Rousing each caitiff to his task of care,
Of sinful man the sad inheritance;
Summoning revellers from the lagging dance,
Scaring the prowling robber to his den;
Gilding on battled tower the warder's lance,
And warning student pale to leave his pen, [nurse of men.
And yield his drowsy eyes to the kind

What various scenes, and, O! what scenes of woe,
Are witness'd by that red and struggling beam!

The fever'd patient, from his pallet low,
Through crowded hospitals beholds its stream;
The ruin'd maiden trembles at its gleam,
The debtor wakes to thought of gyve and jail, [ing dream;
The love-lorn wretch starts from torment-
The wakeful mother, by the glimmering pale, [his feeble wail.
Trims her sick infant's couch, and soothes

II.

At dawn the towers of Stirling rang
With soldier-step and weapon-clang,
While drums, with rolling note, foretell
Relief to weary sentinel.
Through narrow loop and casement barr'd,
The sunbeams sought the Court of Guard,
And, struggling with the smoky air,
Deaden'd the torches' yellow glare.
In comfortless alliance shone
The lights through arch of blacken'd stone,
And show'd wild shapes in garb of war,
Faces deform'd with beard and scar,
All haggard from the midnight watch,
And fever'd with the stern debauch;
For the oak table's massive board,
Flooded with wine, with fragments stored,
And beakers drain'd, and cups o'erthrown,
Show'd in what sport the night had flown.
Some, weary, snored on floor and bench;
Some labour'd still their thirst to quench;
Some, chill'd with watching, spread their hands
O'er the huge chimney's dying brands,
While round them, or beside them flung,
At every step their harness rung.

III.

These drew not for their fields the sword,
Like tenants of a feudal lord,
Nor own'd the patriarchal claim
Of Chieftain in their leader's name;
Adventurers they, from far who roved,
To live by battle which they loved.*
There the Italian's clouded face;
The swarthy Spaniard's there you trace;
The mountain-loving Switzer there
More freely breathed in mountain air;
The Fleming there despised the soil,
That paid so ill the labourer's toil;
Their rolls show'd French and German name;
And merry England's exiles came,
To share, with ill-concealed disdain,
Of Scotland's pay the scanty gain.
All brave in arms, well train'd to wield
The heavy halberd, brand, and shield;
In camps licentious, wild, and bold;
In pillage fierce and uncontroll'd;
And now, by holytide and feast,
From rules of discipline released.

IV.

They held debate of bloody fray,
Fought 'twixt Loch Katrine and Achray.
Fierce was their speech, and, 'mid their words,
Their hands oft grappled to their swords;
Nor sunk their tone to spare the ear
Of wounded comrades groaning near,
Whose mangled limbs, and bodies gored,
Bore token of the mountain sword,
Though, neighbouring to the Court of Guard, [heard;
Their prayers and feverish wails were
Sad burden to the ruffian joke,
And savage oath by fury spoke!—
At length up-started John of Brent,
A yeoman from the banks of Trent;
A stranger to respect or fear,
In peace a chaser of the deer,
In host a hardy mutineer,
But still the boldest of the crew,
When deed of danger was to do.
He grieved, that day, their games cut short,
And marr'd the dicer's brawling sport,
And shouted loud, "Renew the bowl!
And, while a merry catch I troll,
Let each the buxom chorus bear,
Like brethren of the brand and spear."

V.

SOLDIER'S SONG.

Our vicar still preaches that Peter and Poule [brown bowl,
Laid a swinging long curse on the bonny
That there's wrath and despair in the bonny black-jack, [sack:
And the seven deadly sins in a flagon of
Yet whoop, Barnaby! off with thy liquor,
Drink upsees† out, and a fig for the vicar!

Our vicar he calls it damnation to sip
The ripe ruddy dew of a woman's dear lip,
Says, that Beelzebub lurks in her kerchief so sly, [black eye
And Apollyon shoots darts from her merry
Yet whoop, Jack! kiss Gillian the quicker
Till she bloom like a rose, and a fig for the vicar!

Our vicar thus preaches—and why should he not? [and pot
For the dues of his cure are the plackets
And 'tis right of his office poor laymen to lurch,
Who infringe the domains of our good Mother Church.
Yet whoop, bully-boys! off with your liquor, [the vicar
Sweet Marjorie's the word, and a fig for

† Bacchanalian interjection, borrowed from the Dutch.

VI.

he warder's challenge, heard without,
aid in mid-roar the merry shout.
soldier to the portal went,—
Here is old Bertram, sirs, of Ghent;
nd,—beat for jubilee the drum!
maid and minstrel with him come."
ertram, a Fleming, grey and scarr'd,
'as entering now the Court of Guard,
harper with him, and in plaid
ll muffled close, a mountain maid,
'ho backward shrunk to 'scape the view
f the loose scene and boisterous crew.
What news?" they roar'd.—"I only know,
'om noon till eve we fought with foe,
s wild and as untameable
s the rude mountains where they dwell;
n both sides store of blood is lost,
or much success can either boast."—
But whence thy captives, friend? such
s theirs must needs reward thy toil. [spoil
d dost thou wax, and wars grow sharp;
ou now hast glee-maiden and harp!
et thee an ape, and trudge the land,
ie leader of a juggler band."—*

VII.

No, comrade;—no such fortune mine.
ter the fight, these sought our line,
iat aged harper and the girl,
id, having audience of the Earl,
ar bade I should purvey them steed,
id bring them hitherward with speed.
orbear your mirth and rude alarm,
or none shall do them shame or harm."—
Hear ye his boast?" cried John of Brent,
er to strife and jangling bent;
Shall he strike doe beside our lodge,
id yet the jealous niggard grudge
o pay the forester his fee?
l have my share, howe'er it be,
espite of Moray, Mar, or thee."
rtram his forward step withstood;
id, burning in his vengeful mood,
d Allan, though unfit for strife,
id hand upon his dagger-knife;
t Ellen boldly stepp'd between,
id dropp'd at once the tartan screen:—
, from his morning cloud, appears
ie sun of May, through summer tears.
ie savage soldiery, amazed,
on descended angel gazed;
en hardy Brent, abash'd and tamed,
ood half admiring, half ashamed.

VIII.

ldly she spoke,—"Soldiers, attend!
y father was the soldier's friend;
eer'd him in camps, in marches led,
d with him in the battle bled.
ot from the valiant, or the strong,
ould exile's daughter suffer wrong."—
Answer'd De Brent, most forward still
In every feat or good or ill,—
"I shame me of the part I play'd;
And thou an outlaw's child, poor maid!
An outlaw I by forest laws,
And merry Needwood knows the cause.
Poor Rose,—if Rose be living now,"—
He wiped his iron eye and brow,—
"Must bear such age, I think, as thou.—
Hear ye, my mates; I go to call
The Captain of our watch to hall:
There lies my halberd on the floor;
And he that steps my halberd o'er,
To do the maid injurious part,
My shaft shall quiver in his heart!—
Beware loose speech, or jesting rough:
Ye all know John de Brent. Enough."

IX.

Their Captain came, a gallant young,—
(Of Tullibardine's house he sprung,)
Nor wore he yet the spurs of knight;
Gay was his mien, his humour light,
And, though by courtesy controll'd,
Forward his speech, his bearing bold.
The high-born maiden ill could brook
The scanning of his curious look
And dauntless eye;—and yet, in sooth,
Young Lewis was a generous youth;
But Ellen's lovely face and mien,
Ill suited to the garb and scene,
Might lightly bear construction strange,
And give loose fancy scope to range.
"Welcome to Stirling towers, fair maid!
Come ye to seek a champion's aid,
On palfrey white, with harper hoar,
Like errant damosel of yore?
Does thy high quest a knight require,
Or may the venture suit a squire?"
Her dark eye flash'd;—she paused and sigh'd,—
"O what have I to do with pride!—
Through scenes of sorrow, shame, and strife,
A suppliant for a father's life,
I crave an audience of the King.
Behold, to back my suit, a ring,
The royal pledge of grateful claims,
Given by the Monarch to Fitz-James."

X.

The signet-ring young Lewis took,
With deep respect and alter'd look;
And said,—"This ring our duties own;
And pardon, if to worth unknown,
In semblance mean obscurely veil'd,
Lady, in aught my folly fail'd.
Soon as the day flings wide his gates,
The King shall know what suitor waits.
Please you, meanwhile, in fitting bower
Repose you till his waking hour;
Female attendance shall obey

Your hest, for service or array.
Permit I marshal you the way."
But, ere she follow'd, with the grace
And open bounty of her race,
She bade her slender purse be shared
Among the soldiers of the guard.
The rest with thanks their guerdon took;
But Brent, with shy and awkward look,
On the reluctant maiden's hold
Forced bluntly back the proffer'd gold;—
"Forgive a haughty English heart,
And O forget its ruder part!
The vacant purse shall be my share,
Which in my barret-cap I'll bear,
Perchance, in jeopardy of war,
Where gayer crests may keep afar."
With thanks—'twas all she could—the
His rugged courtesy repaid. [maid

XI.

When Ellen forth with Louis went,
Allan made suit to John of Brent:—
"My lady safe, O let your grace
Give me to see my master's face!
His minstrel I, to share his doom
Bound from the cradle to the tomb.
Tenth in descent, since first my sires
Waked for his noble house their lyres,
Nor one of all the race was known
But prized its weal above their own.
With the Chief's birth begins our care;
Our harp must soothe the infant heir,
Teach the youth tales of fight, and grace
His earliest feat of field or chase;
In peace, in war, our rank we keep,
We cheer his board, we soothe his sleep,
Nor leave him till we pour our verse—
A doleful tribute!—o'er his hearse.
Then let me share his captive lot;
It is my right—deny it not!"—
"Little we reck," said John of Brent,
"We Southern men, of long descent;
Nor wot we how a name—a word—
Makes clansmen vassals to a lord:
Yet kind my noble landlord's part,—
God bless the house of Beaudesert!
And, but I loved to drive the deer,
More than to guide the labouring steer,
I had not dwelt an outcast here.
Come, good old Minstrel, follow me;
Thy Lord and Chieftain shalt thou see."

XII.

Then, from a rusted iron hook,
A bunch of ponderous keys he took,
Lighted a torch, and Allan led
Through grated arch and passage dread.
Portals they pass'd, where, deep within,
Spoke prisoner's moan, and fetters' din;
Through rugged vaults, where, loosely
stored, [sword,
Lay wheel, and axe, and headsman's
And many a hideous engine grim,
For wrenching joint, and crushing limb,
By artist form'd who deem'd it shame
And sin to give their work a name.
They halted at a low-brow'd porch,
And Brent to Allan gave the torch,
While bolt and chain he backward roll'd,
And made the bar unhasp its hold.
They enter'd:—'twas a prison-room
Of stern security and gloom,
Yet not a dungeon; for the day
Through lofty gratings found its way,
And rude and antique garniture
Deck'd the sad walls and oaken floor;
Such as the rugged days of old
Deem'd fit for captive noble's hold.
"Here," said De Brent, "thou mayst
Till the Leech visit him again. [remain
Strict is his charge, the warders tell,
To tend the noble prisoner well."
Retiring then, the bolt he drew,
And the lock's murmurs growl'd anew.
Roused at the sound, from lowly bed
A captive feebly raised his head;
The wondering Minstrel look'd, and
knew—
Not his dear lord, but Roderick Dhu!
For, come from where Clan-Alpine fought,
They, erring, deem'd the Chief he sought.

XIII.

As the tall ship, whose lofty prore
Shall never stem the billows more,
Deserted by her gallant band,
Amid the breakers lies astrand,—
So, on his couch, lay Roderick Dhu!
And oft his fever'd limbs he threw
In toss abrupt, as when her sides
Lie rocking in the advancing tides,
That shake her frame with ceaseless beat,
Yet cannot heave her from her seat;—
O! how unlike her course at sea!
Or his free step on hill and lea!—
Soon as the Minstrel he could scan,
"What of the lady?—of my clan?—
My mother?—Douglas?—tell me all!
Have they been ruin'd in my fall?
Ah, yes! or wherefore art thou here?
Yet speak,—speak boldly,—do not fear."—
(For Allan, who his mood well knew,
Was choked with grief and terror too.)—
"Who fought?—who fled?—Old man, be
brief;—
Some might—for they had lost their Chief.
Who basely live?—who bravely died?"—
"O, calm thee, Chief!" the Minstrel cried;
"Ellen is safe!"—"For that, thank
Heaven!"—
"And hopes are for the Douglas given;—
The Lady Margaret, too, is well;
And, for thy clan,—on field or fell,

Has never harp of minstrel told
Of combat fought so true and bold.
Thy stately Pine is yet unbent,
Though many a goodly bough is rent."

XIV.

The Chieftain rear'd his form on high,
And fever's fire was in his eye;
But ghastly, pale, and livid streaks
Chequer'd his swarthy brow and cheeks.
—"Hark, Minstrel! I have heard thee
With measure bold, on festal day, [play,
In yon lone isle, . . . again where ne'er
Shall harper play, or warrior hear! . . .
That stirring air that peals on high,
O'er Dermid's race our victory.—
Strike it!*—and then (for well thou canst),
Free from thy minstrel-spirit glanced,
Fling me the picture of the fight,
When met my clan the Saxon might.
I'll listen, till my fancy hears
The clang of swords, the crash of spears!
These grates, these walls, shall vanish
For the fair field of fighting men, [then,
And my free spirit burst away,
As if it soar'd from battle fray."
The trembling bard with awe obey'd,—
Slow on the harp his hand he laid;
But soon remembrance of the sight
He witness'd from the mountain's height,
With what old Bertram told at night,
Awaken'd the full power of song,
And bore him in career along;—
As shallop launch'd on river's tide,
That slow and fearful leaves the side,
But, when it feels the middle stream,
Drives downward swift as lightning's beam.

XV.

BATTLE OF BEAL' AN DUINE.*

"The Minstrel came once more to view
The eastern ridge of Benvenue,
For, e'er he parted, he would say
Farewell to lovely Loch Achray—
Where shall he find, in foreign land,
So lone a lake, so sweet a strand!
There is no breeze upon the fern,
Nor ripple on the lake,
Upon her eyry nods the erne,
The deer has sought the brake;
The small birds will not sing aloud,
The springing trout lies still,
So darkly glooms yon thunder cloud,
That swathes, as with a purple shroud,
Benledi's distant hill.
Is it the thunder's solemn sound
That mutters deep and dread,
Or echoes from the groaning ground
The warrior's measured tread?
Is it the lightning's quivering glance
That on the thicket streams,
Or do they flash on spear and lance
The sun's retiring beams?
—I see the dagger crest of Mar,
I see the Moray's silver star,
Wave o'er the cloud of Saxon war,
That up the lake comes winding far!
To hero bound for battle-strife,
Or bard of martial lay,
'Twere worth ten years of peaceful life,
One glance at their array!

XVI.

"Their light-arm'd archers far and near,
Survey'd the tangled ground;
Their centre ranks, with pike and spear,
A twilight forest frown'd;
Their barbèd horsemen, in the rear,
The stern battalia crown'd.
No cymbal clash'd, no clarion rang,
Still were the pipe and drum;
Save heavy tread, and armour's clang,
The sullen march was dumb.
There breathed no wind their crests to shake,
Or wave their flags abroad; [shake,
Scarce the frail aspen seem'd to quake,
That shadow'd o'er their road.
Their vanward scouts no tidings bring,
Can rouse no lurking foe,
Nor spy a trace of living thing,
Save when they stirr'd the roe;
The host moves like a deep-sea wave,
Where rise no rocks its pride to brave,
High-swelling, dark, and slow.
The lake is pass'd, and now they gain
A narrow and a broken plain,
Before the Trosachs' rugged jaws;
And here the horse and spearmen pause,
While, to explore the dangerous glen,
Dive through the pass the archer-men.

XVII.

"At once there rose so wild a yell
Within that dark and narrow dell,
As all the fiends, from heaven that fell,
Had peal'd the banner-cry of hell!
Forth from the pass in tumult driven,
Like chaff before the wind of heaven,
The archery appear;
For life! for life! their plight they ply—
And shriek, and shout, and battle-cry,
And plaids and bonnets waving high,
And broadswords flashing to the sky,
Are maddening in the rear.
Onward they drive, in dreadful race,
Pursuers and pursued;
Before that tide of flight and chase,
How shall it keep its rooted place,
The spearmen's twilight wood?—
'Down, down,' cried Mar, 'your lances down!
Bear back both friend and foe!'—

Like reeds before the tempest's frown,
That serried grove of lances brown
At once lay levell'd low;
And closely shouldering side to side,
The bristling ranks the onset bide.—
'We'll quell the savage mountaineer,
As their Tinchel† cows the game!
They come as fleet as forest deer,
We'll drive them back as tame.'—

XVIII.

"Bearing before them, in their course,
The relics of the archer force,
Like wave with crest of sparkling foam,
Right onward did Clan-Alpine come.
Above the tide, each broadsword bright
Was brandishing like beam of light,
Each targe was dark below;
And with the ocean's mighty swing,
When heaving to the tempest's wing,
They hurled them on the foe.
I heard the lance's shivering crash,
As when the whirlwind rends the ash;
I heard the broadsword's deadly clang,
As if an hundred anvils rang!
But Moray wheel'd his rearward rank
Of horsemen on Clan-Alpine's flank,
—'My banner-man, advance!
I see,' he cried, 'their column shake.—
Now, gallants! for your ladies' sake,
Upon them with the lance!'—
The horsemen dash'd among the rout,
As deer break through the broom;
Their steeds are stout, their swords are
They soon make lightsome room. [out,
Clan-Alpine's best are backward borne—
Where, where was Roderick then?
One blast upon his bugle-horn
Were worth a thousand men!
And refluent through the pass of fear
The battle's tide was pour'd;
Vanish'd the Saxon's struggling spear,
Vanish'd the mountain-sword.
As Bracklinn's chasm, so black and steep,
Receives her roaring linn,
As the dark caverns of the deep
Suck the wild whirlpool in,
So did the deep and darksome pass
Devour the battle's mingled mass:
None linger now upon the plain,
Save those who ne'er shall fight again.

XIX.

"Now westward rolls the battle's din,
That deep and doubling pass within,
—Minstrel, away! the work of fate
Is bearing on: its issue wait,
Where the rude Trosachs' dread defile
Opens on Katrine's lake and isle.
Grey Benvenue I soon repass'd,
Loch Katrine lay beneath me cast.
The sun is set;—the clouds are met,
The lowering scowl of heaven
An inky view of vivid blue
To the deep lake has given;
Strange gusts of wind from mountain-glen
Swept o'er the lake, then sunk agen.
I heeded not the eddying surge,
Mine eye but saw the Trosachs' gorge,
Mine ear but heard the sullen sound,
Which like an earthquake shook the ground,
And spoke the stern and desperate strife
That parts not but with parting life,
Seeming, to minstrel ear, to toll
The dirge of many a passing soul.
Nearer it comes—the dim-wood glen
The martial flood disgorged agen,
But not in mingled tide:
The plaided warriors of the North
High on the mountain thunder forth
And overhang its side;
While by the lake below appears
The dark'ning cloud of Saxon spears.
At weary bay each shattered band,
Eyeing their foemen, sternly stand;
Their banners stream like tatter'd sail,
That flings its fragments to the gale,
And broken arms and disarray
Mark'd the fell havoc of the day.

XX.

"Viewing the mountain's ridge askance,
The Saxon stood in sullen trance,
Till Moray pointed with his lance,
And cried—'Behold yon isle!—
See! none are left to guard its strand,
But women weak, that wring the hand:
'Tis there of yore the robber band
Their booty wont to pile;—
My purse, with bonnet-pieces store,
To him will swim a bow-shot o'er,
And loose a shallop from the shore.
Lightly we'll tame the war-wolf then,
Lords of his mate, and brood, and den.'
Forth from the ranks a spearman sprung,
On earth his casque and corslet rung,
He plunged him in the wave:—
All saw the deed—the purpose knew,
And to their clamours Benvenue
A mingled echo gave;
The Saxons shout, their mate to cheer,
The helpless females scream for fear,
And yells for rage the mountaineer.
'Twas then, as by the outcry riven,
Pour'd down at once the lowering heaven;
A whirlwind swept Loch Katrine's breast,
Her billows rear'd their snowy crest.

† A circle of sportsmen, who, by surrounding a great space, and gradually narrowing, brought immense quantities of deer together, which usually made desperate efforts to break through the *Tinchel*.

Well for the swimmer swell'd they high,
To mar the Highland marksman's eye;
For round him shower'd, 'mid rain and hail,
The vengeful arrows of the Gael.—
In vain—He nears the isle—and lo!
His hand is on a shallop's bow.
—Just then a flash of lightning came,
It tinged the waves and strand with flame;—
I mark'd Duncraggan's widow'd dame—
Behind an oak I saw her stand,
A naked dirk gleam'd in her hand:
It darken'd,—but, amid the moan
Of waves, I heard a dying groan;
Another flash!—the spearman floats
A weltering corse beside the boats,
And the stern matron o'er him stood,
Her hand and dagger streaming blood.

XXI.

"'Revenge! revenge!' the Saxons cried—
The Gaels' exulting shout replied.
Despite the elemental rage,
Again they hurried to engage;
But, ere they closed in desperate fight,
Bloody with spurring came a knight,
Sprung from his horse, and, from a crag,
Waved 'twixt the hosts a milk-white flag.
Clarion and trumpet by his side
Rung forth a truce-note high and wide,
While, in the Monarch's name, afar
An herald's voice forbade the war,
For Bothwell's lord, and Roderick bold,
Were both, he said, in captive hold."
—But here the lay made sudden stand!—
The harp escaped the Minstrel's hand!—
Oft had he stole a glance, to spy
How Roderick brook'd his minstrelsy:
At first, the Chieftain, to the chime,
With lifted hand, kept feeble time;
That motion ceased,—yet feeling strong
Varied his look as changed the song;
At length, no more his deafen'd ear
The minstrel melody can hear; [clench'd,
His face grows sharp,—his hands are
As if some pang his heart-strings wrench'd;
Set are his teeth, his fading eye
Is sternly fix'd on vacancy;
Thus, motionless, and moanless, drew
His parting breath, stout Roderick Dhu!—
Old Allan-Bane look'd on aghast,
While grim and still his spirit pass'd:
But when he saw that life was fled,
He pour'd his wailing o'er the dead.

XXII.

LAMENT.

"And art thou cold and lowly laid,
Thy foemen's dread, thy people's aid,
Breadalbane's boast, Clan-Alpine's shade!
For thee shall none a requiem say?
—For thee,—who loved the minstrel's lay,
For thee, of Bothwell's house the stay,
The shelter of her exiled line,
E'en in this prison-house of thine,
I'll wail for Alpine's honour'd Pine!

"What groans shall yonder valleys fill!
What shrieks of grief shall rend yon hill!
What tears of burning rage shall thrill,
When mourns thy tribe thy battles done,
Thy fall before the race was won,
The sword ungirt ere set of sun!
There breathes not clansman of thy line,
But would have given his life for thine.—
O woe for Alpine's honour'd Pine!

"Sad was thy lot on mortal stage!—
The captive thrush may brook the cage,
The prison'd eagle dies for rage.
Brave spirit, do not scorn my strain!
And, when its notes awake again,
Even she, so long beloved in vain,
Shall with my harp her voice combine,
And mix her woe and tears with mine,
To wail Clan-Alpine's honour'd Pine."—

XXIII.

Ellen, the while, with bursting heart,
Remain'd in lordly bower apart,
Where play'd, with many-colour'd gleams,
Through storied pane the rising beams.
In vain on gilded roof they fall,
And lighten'd up a tapestried wall,
And for her use a menial train
A rich collation spread in vain.
The banquet proud, the chamber gay,
Scarce drew one curious glance astray;
Or, if she look'd, 'twas but to say,
With bitter omen dawn'd the day
In that lone isle, where waved on high
The dun-deer's hide for canopy;
Where oft her noble father shared
The simple meal her care prepared,
While Lufra, crouching by her side,
Her station claim'd with jealous pride,
And Douglas, bent on woodland game,
Spoke of the chase to Malcolm Græme,
Whose answer, oft at random made,
The wandering of his thoughts betray'd.—
Those who such simple joys have known,
Are taught to prize them when they're gone.
But sudden, see, she lifts her head!
The window seeks with cautious tread.
What distant music has the power
To win her in this woful hour!
'Twas from a turret that o'erhung
Her latticed bower, the strain was sung.

XXIV.

LAY OF THE IMPRISONED HUNTSMAN.

"My hawk is tired of perch and hood,
My idle greyhound loathes his food,
My horse is weary of his stall,
And I am sick of captive thrall.

I wish I were, as I have been,
Hunting the hart in forest green,
With bended bow and bloodhound free,
For that's the life is meet for me.
I hate to learn the ebb of time,
From yon dull steeple's drowsy chime,
Or mark it as the sunbeams crawl,
Inch after inch, along the wall.
The lark was wont my matins ring,
The sable rook my vespers sing;
These towers, although a king's they be,
Have not a hall of joy for me.
No more at dawning morn I rise,
And sun myself in Ellen's eyes,
Drive the fleet deer the forest through,
And homeward wend with evening dew;
A blithsome welcome blithely meet,
And lay my trophies at her feet,
While fled the eve on wing of glee,—
That life is lost to love and me!"

XXV.

The heart-sick lay was hardly said,
The list'ner had not turn'd her head,
It trickled still, the starting tear,
When light a footstep struck her ear,
And Snowdoun's graceful Knight was near.
She turn'd the hastier, lest again
The prisoner should renew his strain.—
"O welcome, brave Fitz-James!" she said;
"How may an almost orphan maid
Pay the deep debt"——"O say not so!
To me no gratitude you owe.
Not mine, alas! the boon to give,
And bid thy noble father live;
I can but be thy guide, sweet maid,
With Scotland's King thy suit to aid.
No tyrant he, though ire and pride
May lay his better mood aside.
Come, Ellen, come! 'tis more than time—
He holds his court at morning prime."
With beating heart, and bosom wrung,
As to a brother's arm she clung.
Gently he dried the falling tear,
And gently whisper'd hope and cheer;
Her faltering steps half led, half staid,
Through gallery fair, and high arcade,
Till, at his touch, its wings of pride
A portal arch unfolded wide.

XXVI.

Within 'twas brilliant all and light,
A thronging scene of figures bright;
It glow'd on Ellen's dazzled sight,
As when the setting sun has given
Ten thousand hues to summer even,
And from their tissue, fancy frames
Aërial knights and fairy dames.
Still by Fitz-James her footing staid;
A few faint steps she forward made,
Then slow her drooping head she raised,
And fearful round the presence gazed
For him she sought, who own'd this state,
The dreaded Prince whose will was fate.
She gazed on many a princely port,
Might well have ruled a royal court;
On many a splendid garb she gazed,
Then turn'd bewilder'd and amazed,
For all stood bare; and, in the room,
Fitz-James alone wore cap and plume.
To him each lady's look was lent;
On him each courtier's eye was bent;
Midst furs, and silks, and jewels sheen,
He stood, in simple Lincoln green,
The centre of the glittering ring,—
And Snowdoun's Knight is Scotland's King! *

XXVII.

As wreath of snow, on mountain-breast,
Slides from the rock that gave it rest,
Poor Ellen glided from her stay,
And at the Monarch's feet she lay;
No word her choking voice commands,—
She show'd the ring—she clasp'd her hands.
O! not a moment could he brook,
The generous Prince, that suppliant look!
Gently he raised her; and, the while,
Check'd with a glance the circle's smile;
Graceful, but grave, her brow he kiss'd,
And bade her terrors be dismiss'd:—
"Yes, Fair; the wandering poor Fitz-
The fealty of Scotland claims. [James
To him thy woes, thy wishes, bring;
He will redeem his signet ring.
Ask nought for Douglas; yester even,
His Prince and he have much forgiven:
Wrong hath he had from slanderous
I, from his rebel kinsmen, wrong. [tongue,
We would not, to the vulgar crowd, [loud;
Yield what they craved with clamour
Calmly we heard and judged his cause,
Our council aided, and our laws.
I stanch'd thy father's death-feud stern
With stout De Vaux and Grey Glencairn;
And Bothwell's Lord henceforth we own
The friend and bulwark of our Throne.—
But, lovely infidel, how now?
What clouds thy misbelieving brow?
Lord James of Douglas, lend thine aid;
Thou must confirm this doubting maid."

XXVIII.

Then forth the noble Douglas sprung,
And on his neck his daughter hung.
The Monarch drank, that happy hour,
The sweetest, holiest draught of Power,—
When it can say, with godlike voice,
Arise, sad Virtue, and rejoice!
Yet would not James the general eye
On Nature's raptures long should pry;
He stepp'd between—"Nay, Douglas,
Steal not my proselyte away! [nay,

The riddle 'tis my right to read,
That brought this happy chance to speed.
Yes, Ellen, when disguised I stray
In life's more low but happier way,
'Tis under name which veils my power;
Nor falsely veils—for Stirling's tower
Of yore the name of Snowdoun claims,*
And Normans call me James Fitz-James.
Thus watch I o'er insulted laws,
Thus learn to right the injured cause."—
Then, in a tone apart and low,—
"Ah, little traitress! none must know
What idle dream, what lighter thought,
What vanity full dearly bought,
Join'd to thine eye's dark witchcraft, drew
My spell-bound steps to Benvenue,
In dangerous hour, and all but gave
Thy Monarch's life to mountain glaive!"—
Aloud he spoke—"Thou still dost hold
That little talisman of gold,
Pledge of my faith, Fitz-James's ring—
What seeks fair Ellen of the King?"

XXIX.

Full well the conscious maiden guess'd
He probed the weakness of her breast;
But, with that consciousness, there came
A lightening of her fears for Græme,
And more she deem'd the Monarch's ire
Kindled 'gainst him, who, for her sire,
Rebellious broadsword boldly drew;
And, to her generous feeling true,
She craved the grace of Roderick Dhu.
"Forbear thy suit:—the King of Kings
Alone can stay life's parting wings:
I know his heart, I know his hand,
Have shared his cheer, and proved his brand—
My fairest earldom would I give
To bid Clan-Alpine's Chieftain live!—
Hast thou no other boon to crave?
No other captive friend to save?"
Blushing, she turn'd her from the King,
And to the Douglas gave the ring,
As if she wish'd her sire to speak
The suit that stain'd her glowing cheek.—
"Nay, then, my pledge has lost its force,
And stubborn justice holds her course.—
Malcolm, come forth!"—and, at the word,
Down kneel'd the Græme to Scotland's Lord.
"For thee, rash youth, no suppliant sues,
From thee may Vengeance claim her dues,
Who, nurtured underneath our smile,
Hast paid our care by treacherous wile,
And sought amid thy faithful clan,
A refuge for an outlawed man,
Dishonouring thus thy loyal name.—
Fetters and warder for the Græme!"——
His chain of gold the King unstrung,
The links o'er Malcolm's neck he flung,
Then gently drew the glittering band,
And laid the clasp on Ellen's hand.

HARP of the North, farewell! The hills grow dark,
On purple peaks a deeper shade descending;
In twilight copse the glow-worm lights her spark,
The deer, half-seen, are to the covert wending.
Resume thy wizard elm! the fountain lending,
And the wild breeze, thy wilder minstrelsy;
Thy numbers sweet with nature's vespers blending,
With distant echo from the fold and lea,
And herd-boy's evening pipe, and hum of housing bee.

Yet, once again, farewell, thou Minstrel harp!
Yet, once again, forgive my feeble sway!
And little reck I of the censure sharp
May idly cavil at an idle lay.
Much have I owed thy strains on life's long way,
Through secret woes the world has never known,
When on the weary night dawn'd wearier day,
And bitterer was the grief devour'd alone.
That I o'erlived such woes, Enchantress! is thine own.

Hark! as my lingering footsteps slow retire,
Some Spirit of the Air has waked thy string!
'Tis now a seraph bold, with touch of fire—
'Tis now the brush of Fairy's frolic wing;—
Receding now, the dying numbers ring
Fainter and fainter down the rugged dell—
And now the mountain breezes scarcely bring
A wandering witch-note of the distant spell—
And now, 'tis silent all!—Enchantress, fare thee well!

THE

VISION OF DON RODERICK.

TO

JOHN WHITMORE, ESQ.,

AND TO THE COMMITTEE OF SUBSCRIBERS FOR RELIEF OF THE PORTUGUESE SUFFEREKS IN WHICH HE PRESIDES,

THIS POEM,

(THE VISION OF DON RODERICK,)

COMPOSED FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE FUND UNDER THEIR MANAGEMENT,

IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED BY

WALTER SCOTT.

Preface.

THE following Poem is founded upon a Spanish Tradition, particularly detailed in the Notes; but bearing, in general, that DON RODERICK, the last Gothic King of Spain, when the invasion of the Moors was impending, had the temerity to descend into an ancient vault, near Toledo, the opening of which had been denounced as fatal to the Spanish Monarchy. The legend adds, that his rash curiosity was mortified by an emblematical representation of those Saracens who, in the year 714, defeated him in battle, and reduced Spain under their dominion. I have presumed to prolong the Vision of the Revolutions of Spain down to the present eventful crisis of the Peninsula; and to divide it, by a supposed change of scene, into THREE PERIODS. The FIRST of these represents the Invasion of the Moors, the Defeat and Death of Roderick, and closes with the peaceful occupation of the country by the Victors. The SECOND PERIOD embraces the state of the Peninsula, when the conquests of the Spaniards and Portuguese in the East and West Indies had raised to the highest pitch the renown of their arms; sullied, however, by superstition and cruelty. An allusion to the inhumanities of the Inquisition terminates this picture. The LAST PART of the Poem opens with the state of Spain previous to the unparallelled treachery of BUONAPARTE; gives a sketch of the usurpation attempted upon that unsuspicious and friendly kingdom, and terminates with the arrival of the British succours. It may be further proper to mention, that the object of the Poem is less to commemorate or detail particular incidents, than to exhibit a general and impressive picture of the several periods brought upon the stage.

I am too sensible of the respect due to the Public, especially by one who has already experienced more than ordinary indulgence, to offer any apology for the inferiority of the poetry to the subject it is chiefly designed to commemorate. Yet I think it proper to mention, that while I was hastily executing a work, written for a temporary purpose, and on passing events, the task was most cruelly interrupted by the successive deaths of LORD PRESIDENT BLAIR and LORD VISCOUNT MELVILLE. In those distinguished characters, I had not only to regret persons whose lives were most important to Scotland, but also whose notice and patronage honoured my entrance upon active life; and, I may add, with melancholy pride, who permitted my more advanced age to claim no common share in their friendship. Under such interruptions, the following verses, which my best and happiest efforts must have left far unworthy of their theme, have, I am myself sensible, an appearance of negligence and incoherence, which, in other circumstances, I might have been able to remove.

EDINBURGH, *June* 24, 1811.

THE VISION OF DON RODERICK.

Quid dignum memorare tuis, Hispania, terris,
Vox humana valet!—CLAUDIAN.

INTRODUCTION.

I.

LIVES there a strain, whose sounds of mounting fire [war;
May rise distinguish'd o'er the din of
Or died it with yon Master of the Lyre,
Who sung beleaguer'd Ilion's evil star?
Such, WELLINGTON, might reach thee from afar, [range;
Wafting its descant wide o'er Ocean's
Nor shouts, nor clashing arms, its mood could mar, [trumpet-change,
All as it swell'd 'twixt each loud
That clangs to Britain victory, to Portugal revenge!

II.

Yes! such a strain, with all-o'erpouring measure, [sound,
Might melodise with each tumultuous
Each voice of fear or triumph, woe or pleasure, [around;
That rings Mondego's ravaged shores
The thundering cry of hosts with conquest crown'd, [moan,
The female shriek, the ruin'd peasant's
The shout of captives from their chains unbound, [groan,
The foil'd oppressor's deep and sullen
A Nation's choral hymn for tyranny o'erthrown.

III.

But we, weak minstrels of a laggard day,
Skill'd but to imitate an elder page,
Timid and raptureless, can we repay
The debt thou claims't in this exhausted age? [might engage
Thou giv'st our lyres a theme, that
Those that could send thy name o'er sea and land, [Homer's rage
While sea and land shall last; for
A theme; a theme for Milton's mighty hand—
How much unmeet for us, a faint degenerate band!

IV.

Ye mountains stern! within whose rugged breast [repose;
The friends of Scottish freedom found
Ye torrents! whose hoarse sounds have soothed their rest, [foes;
Returning from the field of vanquish'd
Say, have ye lost each wild majestic close,
That erst the choir of Bards or Druids flung,
What time their hymn of victory arose,
And Cattraeth's glens with voice of triumph rung,
And mystic Merlin harp'd, and grey-hair'd Llywarch sung!*

V.

O! if your wilds such minstrelsy retain,
As sure your changeful gales seem oft to say [again,
When sweeping wild, and sinking soft
Like trumpet-jubilee, or harp's wild sway;
If ye can echo such triumphant lay,
Then lend the note to him has loved you long!
Who pious gather'd each tradition grey,
That floats your solitary wastes along,
And with affection vain gave them new voice in song.

VI.

For not till now, how oft soe'er the task
Of truant verse hath lighten'd graver care, [ask,
From Muse or Sylvan was he wont to
In phrase poetic, inspiration fair;
Careless he gave his numbers to the air,
They came unsought for, if applauses came; [prayer;
Nor for himself prefers he now the
Let but his verse befit a hero's fame,
Immortal be the verse!—forgot the poet's name!

* An asterisk in these pages signifies that a note upon the passage is to be found at the end of the volume.

VII.

Hark, from yon misty cairn their answer tost: [mantic lyre,
"Minstrel! the fame of whose ro-
Capricious-swelling now, may soon be lost, [fire;
Like the light flickering of a cottage
If to such task presumptuous thou aspire, [due:
Seek not from us the meed to warrior
Age after age has gather'd son to sire,
Since our grey cliffs the din of conflict knew,
Or, pealing through our vales, victorious bugles blew.

VIII.

"Decay'd our old traditionary lore,
Save where the lingering fays renew their ring, [thorn hoar,
By milk-maid seen beneath the haw-
Or round the marge of Minchmore's haunted spring:*
Save where their legends grey-hair'd shepherds sing, [but thine,
That now scarce win a listening ear
Of feuds obscure, and Border ravaging,
And rugged deeds recount in rugged line,
Of moonlight foray made on Teviot, Tweed, or Tyne.

IX.

"No! search romantic lands, where the near Sun [flame,
Gives with unstinted boon ethereal
Where the rude villager, his labour done, [favour'd name;
In verse spontaneous* chants some
Whether Olalia's charms his tribute claim, [of jet;
Her eye of diamond, and her locks
Or whether, kindling at the deeds of Græme,* [set,
He sing, to wild Morisco measure
Old Albin's red claymore, Green Erin's bayonet!

X.

"Explore those regions, where the flinty crest [snows,
Of wild Nevada ever gleams with
Where in the proud Alhambra's ruin'd breast
Barbaric monuments of pomp repose;
Or where the banners of more ruthless foes [Toledo's fane,
Than the fierce Moor, float o'er
From whose tall towers even now the patriot throws [plain
An anxious glance, to spy upon the
The blended ranks of England, Portugal, and Spain.

XI.

"There, of Numantian fire a swarthy spark [eye;
Still lightens in the sunburnt native's
The stately port, slow step, and visage dark, [stancy.
Still mark enduring pride and con-
And, if the glow of feudal chivalry
Beam not, as once, thy nobles' dearest pride,
Iberia! oft thy crestless peasantry
Have seen the plumed Hidalgo quit their side,
Have seen, yet dauntless stood—'gainst fortune fought and died.

XII.

"And cherished still by that unchanging race, [than thine;
Are themes for minstrelsy more high
Of strange tradition many a mystic trace,
Legend and vision, prophecy and sign;
Where wonders wild of Arabesque combine
With Gothic imagery of darker shade,
Forming a model meet for minstrel line.— [tain Spirit said:
Go, seek such theme!"—the Moun-
With filial awe I heard—I heard, and I obey'd.

I.

REARING their crests amid the cloudless skies, [moonlight,
And darkly clustering in the pale
Toledo's holy towers and spires arise,
As from a trembling lake of silver white; [sight
Their mingled shadows intercept the
Of the broad burial-ground outstretch'd below, [night;
And nought disturbs the silence of the
All sleeps in sullen shade, or silver glow, [less flow.
All save the heavy swell of Teio's cease-

II.

All save the rushing swell of Teio's tide,
Or, distant heard, a courser's neigh or tramp; [horsemen ride,
Their changing rounds as watchful
To guard the limits of King Roderick's camp: [damp,
For, through the river's night-fog rolling
Was many a proud pavilion dimly seen, [moon's fair lamp,
Which glimmer'd back, against the
Tissues of silk and silver twisted sheen,
And standards proudly pitch'd, and warders arm'd between.

III.

But of their Monarch's person keeping ward, [vespers toll'd,
Since last the deep-mouth'd bell of
The chosen soldiers of the royal guard
The post beneath the proud Cathedral hold:
A band unlike their Gothic sires of old,
Who, for the cap of steel and iron mace, [deck'd with gold,
Bear slender darts, and casques be-
While silver-studded belts their shoulders grace, [falchion's place.
Where ivory quivers ring in the broad

IV.

In the light language of an idle court,
They murmur'd at their master's long delay, [sport:—
And held his lengthen'd orisons in
"What! will Don Roderick here till morning stay, [away?
To wear in shrift and prayer the night
And are his hours in such dull penance past, [pay?"—*
For fair Florinda's plunder'd charms to
Then to the east their weary eyes they cast,
And wish'd the lingering dawn would glimmer forth at last.

V.

But, far within, Toledo's Prelate lent
An ear of fearful wonder to the King;
The silver lamp a fitful lustre sent,
So long that sad confession witnessing: [thing,
For Roderick told of many a hidden
Such as are lothly utter'd to the air,
When Fear, Remorse, and Shame the bosom wring, [bear,
And Guilt his secret burden cannot
And Conscience seeks in speech a respite from Despair.

VI.

Full on the Prelate's face, and silver hair, [roll'd:
The stream of failing light was feebly
But Roderick's visage, though his head was bare, [mantle's fold.
Was shadow'd by his hand and
While of his hidden soul the sins he told,
Proud Alaric's descendant could not brook, [behold,
That mortal man his bearing should
Or boast that he had seen, when Conscience shook, [warrior's look.
Fear tame a monarch's brow, Remorse a

VII.

The old man's faded cheek wax'd yet more pale, [wray'd;
As many a secret sad the King be-
As sign and glance eked out the unfinish'd tale, [per staid.—
When in the midst his faltering whis-
"Thus royal Witiza was slain,"—he said;
"Yet, holy Father, deem not it was I."
Thus still Ambition strives her crimes to shade.—
"Oh! rather deem 'twas stern necessity!
Self-preservation bade, and I must kill or die.

VIII.

"And if Florinda's shrieks alarm'd the air,
If she invoked her absent sire in vain,
And on her knees implored that I would spare, [refrain!—
Yet, reverend priest, thy sentence rash
All is not as it seems—the female train
Know by their bearing to disguise their mood:"— [disdain,
But Conscience here, as if in high
Sent to the Monarch's cheek the burning blood— [Prelate stood.
He stay'd his speech abrupt—and up the

IX.

"O harden'd offspring of an iron race!
What of thy crimes, Don Roderick, shall I say? [efface
What alms, or prayers, or penance can
Murder's dark spot, wash treason's stain away?
For the foul ravisher how shall I pray,
Who, scarce repentant, makes his crime his boast? [delay,
How hope Almighty vengeance shall
Unless in mercy to yon Christian host, [sheep be lost?"
He spare the shepherd, lest the guiltless

X.

Then kindled the dark Tyrant in his mood, [gloom:
And to his brow return'd its dauntless
"And welcome then," he cried, "be blood for blood, [doom!
For treason treachery, for dishonour
Yet will I know whence come they, or by whom. [fated key,
Show, for thou canst—give forth the
And guide me, Priest, to that mysterious room,
Where, if aught true in old tradition be,
His nation's future fates a Spanish King shall see."—

XI.

"Ill-fated Prince! recall the desperate word,
Or pause ere yet the omen thou obey!
Bethink, yon spell-bound portal would afford [way;
Never to former Monarch entrance-

Nor shall it ever ope, old records say,
Save to a King, the last of all his line,
What time his empire totters to decay,
And treason digs, beneath, her fatal mine, [divine."—
And, high above, impends avenging wrath

XII.

"Prelate! a Monarch's fate brooks no delay; [old man took,
Lead on!"—The ponderous key the
And held the winking lamp, and led the way, [secret nook,
By winding stair, dark aisle, and
Then on an ancient gateway bent his look; [essay'd,
And, as the key the desperate King
Low mutter'd thunders the Cathedral shook, [effort made,
And twice he stopp'd, and twice new
Till the huge bolts roll'd back, and the loud hinges bray'd.

XIII.

Long, large, and lofty was that vaulted hall; [marble stone,
Roof, walls, and floor were all of
Of polish'd marble, black as funeral pall,
Carved o'er with signs and characters unknown.
A paly light, as of the dawning, shone
Through the sad bounds, but whence, they could not spy;
For window to the upper air was none;
Yet, by that light, Don Roderick could descry [mortal eye.
Wonders that ne'er till then were seen by

XIV.

Grim sentinels, against the upper wall,
Of molten bronze, two Statues held their place; [tall,
Massive their naked limbs, their stature
Their frowning foreheads golden circles grace. [race,
Moulded they seem'd for kings of giant
That lived and sinn'd before the avenging flood; [mace;
This grasp'd a scythe, that rested on a
This spread his wings for flight, that pondering stood,
Each stubborn seem'd and stern, immutable of mood.

XV.

Fix'd was the right-hand Giant's brazen look [sand,
Upon his brother's glass of shifting
As if its ebb he measured by a book,
Whose iron volume loaded his huge hand; [land,
In which was wrote of many a fallen
Of empires lost, and kings to exile driven:
And o'er that pair their names in sc
expand—
"Lo, DESTINY and TIME! to wh
by Heaven [given,
The guidance of the earth is for a sea

XVI.

Even while they read, the sand-gl
wastes away; [did cre
And, as the last and lagging gra
That right-hand Giant 'gan his c
upsway, [sle
As one that startles from a he
Full on the upper wall the mace's sw
At once descended with the force
thunder, [he
And hurtling down at once, in crumb
The marble boundary was
asunder,
And gave to Roderick's view new sig
of fear and wonder.

XVII.

For they might spy, beyond that mig
breach, [spect
Realms as of Spain in vision'd
Castles and towers, in due propor
each, [tra
As by some skilful artist's hand
Here, cross'd by many a wild Sier
shade, [traveller's
And boundless plains that tire
There, rich with vineyard and
olive glade, [and h
Or deep-embrown'd by forests h
Or wash'd by mighty streams, that slo
murmur'd by.

XVIII.

And here, as erst upon the antique st
Pass'd forth the band of masq
trimly led,
In various forms, and various equip
While fitting strains the hea
fancy fed; [spr
So, to sad Roderick's eye in o
Successive pageants fill'd that m
scene, [
Showing the fate of battles ere
And issue of events that had
been;
And, ever and anon, strange sou
were heard between.

XIX.

First shrill'd an unrepeated fe
shriek!— [the
It seem'd as if Don Roderick
For the bold blood was blanchin
his cheek.— [at
Then answer'd kettle-drum
Gong-peal and cymbal-clank the
appal, [
The Tecbir war-cry, and the

Ring wildly dissonant along the hall.
Needs not to Roderick their dread import tell—
"The Moor!" he cried, "the Moor!—ring out the Tocsin bell!

XX.

"They come! they come! I see the groaning lands [horde;
White with the turbans of each Arab
Swart Zaarah joins her misbelieving bands,
Alla and Mahomet their battle-word,
The choice they yield, the Koran or the Sword— [amain!—
See how the Christians rush to arms
In yonder shout the voice of conflict roar'd, [plain—
The shadowy hosts are closing on the
Now, God and Saint Iago strike, for the good cause of Spain!

XXI.

"By Heaven, the Moors prevail! the Christians yield! [the sign!
Their coward leader gives for flight
The sceptred craven mounts to quit the field— [mine!*
Is not yon steed Orelio?—Yes, 'tis
But never was she turn'd from battle-line:
Lo! where the recreant spurs o'er stock and stone! [divine!
Curses pursue the slave, and wrath
Rivers ingulf him!"—"Hush," in shuddering tone,
he Prelate said—"rash Prince, yon vision'd form's thine own."

XXII.

Just then, a torrent cross'd the flier's course; [ness tried;
The dangerous ford the Kingly Like-
But the deep eddies whelm'd both man and horse, [the tide;
Swept like benighted peasant down
And the proud Moslemah spread far and wide, [band;
As numerous as their native locust
Berber and Ismael's sons the spoils divide, land,
With naked scimitars mete out the
nd for the bondsmen base, the freeborn natives brand.

XXIII.

Then rose the grated Harem, to enclose
The loveliest maidens of the Christian line;
Then, menials, to their misbelieving foes,
Castile's young nobles held forbidden wine; [sign,
Then, too, the holy Cross, salvation's
By impious hands was from the altar thrown,

And the deep aisles of the polluted shrine
Echo'd, for holy hymn and organ-tone,
The Santon's frantic dance, the Fakir's gibbering moan.

XXIV.

How fares Don Roderick?—E'en as one who spies [sable woof,
Flames dart their glare o'er midnight's
And hears around his children's piercing cries, [aloof;
And sees the pale assistants stand
While cruel Conscience brings him bitter proof, [grief;
His folly or his crime have caused his
And while above him nods the crumbling roof,
He curses earth and Heaven—himself in chief— [Heaven's relief!
Desperate of earthly aid, despairing

XXV.

That scythe-arm'd Giant turn'd his fatal glass, [her wings;
And twilight on the landscape closed
Far to Asturian hills the war-sounds pass,
And in their stead rebeck or timbrel rings; [springs,
And to the sound the bell-deck'd dancer
Bazaars resound as when their marts are met,
In tourney light the Moor his jerrid flings, [to set,
And on the land as evening seem'd
The Imaum's chant was heard from mosque or minaret.

XXVI.

So pass'd that pageant. Ere another came, [smoke,
The visionary scene was wrapp'd in
Whose sulph'rous wreaths were cross'd by sheets of flame; [broke,
With every flash a bolt explosive
Till Roderick deem'd the fiends had burst their yoke,
And waved 'gainst heaven the infernal gonfalone!
For War a new and dreadful language spoke, [known;
Never by ancient warrior heard or
Lightning and smoke her breath, and thunder was her tone.

XXVII.

From the dim landscape roll the clouds away— [heritage;
The Christians have regain'd their
Before the Cross has waned the Crescent's ray, [stage,
And many a monastery decks the
And lofty church, and low-brow'd hermitage. [Knight,—
The land obeys a Hermit and a

The Genii those of Spain for many an age;
This clad in sackcloth, that in armour bright,
And that was VALOUR named, this BIGOTRY was hight.

XXVIII.

VALOUR was harness'd like a chief of old,
Arm'd at all points, and prompt for knightly gest;
His sword was temper'd in the Ebro cold,
Morena's eagle plume adorn'd his crest,
The spoils of Afric's lion bound his breast.
Fierce he stepp'd forward and flung down his gage;
As if of mortal kind to brave the best.
Him follow'd his Companion, dark and sage,
As he, my Master, sung the dangerous Archimage.

XXIX.

Haughty of heart and brow the Warrior came,
In look and language proud as proud might be,
Vaunting his lordship, lineage, fights, and fame:
Yet was that barefoot Monk more proud than he:
And as the ivy climbs the tallest tree,
So round the loftiest soul his toils he wound,
And with his spells subdued the fierce and free,
Till ermined Age, and Youth in arms renown'd,
Honouring his scourge and haircloth, meekly kiss'd the ground.

XXX.

And thus it chanced that VALOUR, peerless knight,
Who ne'er to King or Kaiser veil'd his crest,
Victorious still in bull-feast or in fight,
Since first his limbs with mail he did invest,
Stoop'd ever to that Anchoret's behest;
Nor reason'd of the right, nor of the wrong,
But at his bidding laid the lance in rest,
And wrought fell deeds the troubled world along,
For he was fierce as brave, and pitiless as strong.

XXXI.

Oft his proud galleys sought some new-found world,
That latest sees the sun, or first the morn;
Still at that Wizard's feet their spoils he hurl'd,—
Ingots of ore from rich Potosi borne,
Crowns by Caciques, aigrettes by Omrahs worn,
Wrought of rare gems, but broken, rent, and foul;
Idols of gold from heathen temples torn,
Bedabbled all with blood.—With grisly scowl
The Hermit mark'd the stains, and smiled beneath his cowl.

XXXII.

Then did he bless the offering, and bade make
Tribute to Heaven of gratitude and praise;
And at his word the choral hymns awake,
And many a hand the silver censer sways.
But with the incense-breath these censers raise,
Mix steams from corpses smouldering in the fire;
The groans of prison'd victim mar the lays,
And shrieks of agony confound the quire;
While, 'mid the mingled sounds, the darken'd scenes expire.

XXXIII.

Preluding light, were strains of music heard,
As once again revolved that measured sand;
Such sounds as when, for sylvan dance prepared,
Gay Xeres summons forth her vintage band.
When for the light bolero ready stand
The mozo blithe, with gay muchacha met,*
He conscious of his broider'd cap and band,
She of her netted locks and light cor sette,
Each tiptoe perch'd to spring, and shake the castanet.

XXXIV.

And well such strains the opening scene became;
For VALOUR had relax'd his ardent look,
And at a lady's feet, like lion tame,
Lay stretch'd, full loth the weight of arms to brook;
And soften'd BIGOTRY, upon his book,
Patter'd a task of little good or ill:
But the blithe peasant plied his pruning-hook,
Whistled the muleteer o'er vale and hill,
And rung from village-green the merry seguidille.

XXXV.

Grey Royalty, grown impotent of toil,
Let the grave sceptre slip his lazy hold;
And, careless, saw his rule become the spoil
Of a loose Female and her minion bold.
But peace was on the cottage and the fold,
From court intrigue, from bickering faction far;
Beneath the chestnut-tree Love's tale was told,
And to the tinkling of the light guitar,
Sweet stoop'd the western sun, sweet rose the evening star.

XXXVI.

As that sea-cloud, in size like human hand, [bite seen,
When first from Carmel by the Tish-
Came slowly overshadowing Israel's land, [colours sheen,
A while, perchance, bedeck'd with
While yet the sunbeams on its skirts had been, [its shroud,
Limning with purple and with gold
Till darker folds obscured the blue serene, [sable cloud,
And blotted heaven with one broad
Then sheeted rain burst down, and whirl-winds howl'd aloud:—

XXXVII.

Even so, upon that peaceful scene was pour'd, [foreign band,
Like gathering clouds, full many a
And HE, their Leader, wore in sheath his sword, [hand,
And offer'd peaceful front and open
Veiling the perjured treachery he plann'd, [specious guise,
By friendship's zeal and honour's
Until he won the passes of the land;
Then burst were honour's oath and friendship's ties!
He clutch'd his vulture-grasp, and call'd fair Spain his prize.

XXXVIII.

An Iron Crown his anxious forehead bore; [came,
And well such diadem his heart be-
Who ne'er his purpose for remorse gave o'er, [shame;
Or check'd his course for piety or
Who, train'd a soldier, deem'd a soldier's fame [won,
Might flourish in the wreath of battles
Though neither truth nor honour deck'd his name; [arch's throne,
Who, placed by fortune on a Mon-
Reck'd not of Monarch's faith, or Mercy's kingly tone.

XXXIX.

From a rude isle his ruder lineage came,
The spark, that, from a suburb-hovel's hearth
Ascending, wraps some capital in flame,
Hath not a meaner or more sordid birth. [the earth—
And for the soul that bade him waste
The sable land-flood from some swamp obscure, [dearth,
That poisons the glad husband-field with
And by destruction bids its fame endure,
Hath not a source more sullen, stagnant, and impure.

XL.

Before that Leader strode a shadowy Form; [meteor show'd,
Her limbs like mist, her torch like
With which she beckon'd him through fight and storm, [desperate road,
And all he crush'd that cross'd his
Nor thought, nor fear'd, nor look'd on what he trode. [could not slake,
Realms could not glut his pride, blood
So oft as e'er she shook her torch abroad— [wake,
It was AMBITION bade her terrors
Nor deign'd she, as of yore, a milder form to take.

XLI.

No longer now she spurn'd at mean revenge, [man's moan;
Or staid her hand for conquer'd foe-
As when, the fates of agèd Rome to change, [bicon.
By Cæsar's side she cross'd the Ru-
Nor joy'd she to bestow the spoils she won, were task'd
As when the banded powers of Greece
To war beneath the Youth of Macedon:
No seemly veil her modern minion ask'd,
He saw her hideous face, and loved the fiend unmask'd.

XLII.

That Prelate mark'd his march—On banners blazed [land,
With battles won in many a distant
On eagle-standards and on arms he gazed;
"And hop'st thou then," he said, "thy power shall stand? [sand,
O! thou hast builded on the shifting
And thou hast temper'd it with slaughter's flood; [hand,
And know, fell scourge in the Almighty's
Gore-moisten'd trees shall perish in the bud, [of Blood!"
And by a bloody death, shall die the Man

XLIII.

The ruthless Leader beckon'd from his train [kneel,
A wan fraternal Shade, and bade him
And paled his temples with the crown of Spain, [cried, "Castile!"*
While trumpets rang, and heralds
Not that he loved him—No!—In no man's weal, [heart;
Scarce in his own, e'er joy'd that sullen
Yet round that throne he bade his warriors wheel, [his part,
That the poor puppet might perform
And be a sceptred slave, at his stern beck to start.

XLIV.

But on the Natives of that Land misused,
Not long the silence of amazement hung,
Nor brook'd they long their friendly faith abused;
For, with a common shriek, the general tongue
Exclaim'd, "To arms!"—and fast to arms they sprung.
And VALOUR woke, that Genius of the Land!
Pleasure, and ease, and sloth aside he flung, [band,
As burst the awakening Nazarite his
When 'gainst his treacherous foes he clench'd his dreadful hand.

XLV.

That Mimic Monarch now cast anxious eye [round,
Upon the Satraps that begrit him
Now doff'd his royal robe in act to fly,
And from his brow the diadem unbound.
So oft, so near, the Patriot bugle wound,
From Tarick's walls to Bilboa's mountains blown, [found,
These martial satellites hard labour
To guard a while his substituted throne—
Light recking of his cause, but battling for their own.

XLVI.

From Alpuhara's peak that bugle rung,
And it was echo'd from Corunna's wall; [flung,
Stately Seville responsive war-shot
Grenada caught it in her Moorish hall;
Galicia bade her children fight or fall,
Wild Biscay shook his mountain-coronet,
Valencia roused her at the battle-call,
And, foremost still where Valour's sons are met,
First started to his gun each fiery Miquelet.

XLVII.

But unappall'd, and burning for the fight,
The Invaders march, of victory secure;
Skilful their force to sever or unite,
And trained alike to vanquish or endure. [sure,
Nor skilful less, cheap conquest to en-
Discord to breathe, and jealousy to sow, [lure;
To quell by boasting, and by bribes to
While nought against them bring the unpractised foe,
Save hearts for Freedom's cause, and hands for Freedom's blow.

XLVIII.

Proudly they march—but, O! they march not forth
By one hot field to crown a brief campaign,
As when their Eagles, sweeping through the North, [reign!
Destroy'd at every stoop an ancient
Far other fate had Heaven decreed for Spain; [was plied,
In vain the steel, in vain the torch
New Patriot armies started from the slain, [far, and wide,*
High blazed the war, and long, and
And oft the God of Battles blest the righteous side.

XLIX.

Nor unatoned, where Freedom's foes prevail, [blade and brand,
Remain'd their savage waste. With
By day the Invaders ravaged hill and dale, [band
But, with the darkness, the Guerilla
Came like night's tempest, and avenged the land, [due,
And claim'd for blood the retribution
Probed the hard heart, and lopp'd the murd'rous hand;
And Dawn, when o'er the scene her beams she threw,
'Midst ruins they had made, the spoilers' corpses knew.

L.

What minstrel verse may sing, or tongue may tell,
Amid the vision'd strife from sea to sea,
How oft the Patriot banners rose or fell,
Still honour'd in defeat as victory!
For that sad pageant of events to be,
Show'd every form of fight by field and flood; [their glee,
Slaughter and Ruin, shouting forth
Beheld, while riding on the tempest scud,
The waters choked with slain, the earth bedrer ch'd with blood!

LI.

Then Zaragoza—blighted be the tongue
That names thy name without the honour due! [rung
For never hath the harp of Minstrel
Of faith so felly proved, so firmly true!
Mine, sap, and bomb, thy shatter'd ruins knew,
Each art of war's extremity had room,
Twice from thy half-sack'd streets the foe withdrew, thy doom,
And when at length stern fate decreed
They won not Zaragoza, but her children's bloody tomb.*

LII.

Yet raise thy head, sad city! Though in chains,
Enthrall'd thou canst not be! Arise, [and claim
Reverence from every heart where Free-
dom reigns, [sainted dame,
For what thou worshippest!—thy
She of the column, honour'd be her name
By all, whate'er their creed, who
honour love!
And like the sacred relics of the flame,
That gave some martyr to the bless'd
above,
To every loyal heart may thy sad embers
prove!

LIII.

Nor thine alone such wreck. Gerona
fair! [sung,
Faithful to death thy heroes shall be
Manning the towers, while o'er their
heads the air [nace hung;
Swart as the smoke from raging fur-
Now thicker dark'ning where the mine
was sprung, [flare,
Now briefly lighten'd by the cannon's
Now arch'd with fire-sparks as the
bomb was flung, [tion's glare,
And redd'ning now with conflagra-
While by the fatal light the foes for storm
prepare.

LIV.

While all around was danger, strife,
and fear, [was the sky,
While the earth shook, and darken'd
And wide Destruction stunn'd the
listening ear, [eye,—
Appall'd the heart, and stupefied the
Afar was heard that thrice-repeated cry,
In which old Albion's heart and
tongue unite, [high,
Whene'er her soul is up, and pulse beats
Whether it hail the wine-cup or the
fight,
And bid each arm be strong, or bid each
heart be light,

LV.

Don Roderick turn'd him as the shout
grew loud, [show'd,
A varied scene the changeful vision
For, where the ocean mingled with the
cloud, [broad.
A gallant navy stemm'd the billows
From mast and stern St. George's
symbol flow'd, [dear;
Blent with the silver cross to Scotland
Mottling the sea their landward barges
row'd, [and spear,
And flashed the sun on bayonet, brand,
And the wild beach return'd the seamen's
jovial cheer.

LVI.

It was a dread, yet spirit-stirring sight!—
The billows foam'd beneath a thou-
sand oars;
Fast as they land, the red-cross ranks
unite, [shores;
Legions on legions bright'ning all the
Then banners rise, and cannon-signal
roars, [drum,
Then peals the warlike thunder of the
Thrills the loud fife, the trumpet-flourish
pours, [are dumb,
And patriot hopes awake, and doubts
For, bold in Freedom's cause, the bands
of Ocean come!

LVII.

A various host they came—whose ranks
display [the fight:
Each mode in which the warrior meets
The deep battalion locks its firm array,
And meditates his aim the marksman
light; [bright,
Far glance the light of sabres flashing
Where mounted squadrons shake the
echoing mead; [night,
Lacks not artillery breathing flame and
Nor the fleet ordnance whirl'd by
rapid steed,
That rival's lightning's flash in ruin and in
speed.

LVIII.

A various host—from kindred realms
they came, [nown—
Brethren in arms, but rivals in re-
For yon fair bands shall merry England
claim, [her crown.
And with their deeds of valour deck
Hers their bold port, and hers their
martial frown, [dom's cause,
And hers their scorn of death in free-
Their eyes of azure, and their locks of
brown, [out a pause,
And the blunt speech that bursts with-
And freeborn thoughts, which league the
Soldier with the Laws.

LIX.

And, O! loved warriors of the Minstrel's
land! [wave!
Yonder your bonnets nod, your tartans
The rugged form may mark the moun-
tain band, [more grave;
And harsher features, and a mien
But ne'er in battle-field throbb'd heart
so brave, [Scottish plaid;
As that which beats beneath the
And when the pibroch bids the battle
rave, [are laid,
And level for the charge your arms
Where lives the desperate foe that for such
onset staid!

LX.

Hark! from yon stately ranks what laughter rings, [minstrelsy,
Mingling wild mirth with war's stern
His jest while each blithe comrade round him flings, [glee!
And moves to death with military
Boast, Erin, boast them! tameless, frank, and free, [danger known,
In kindness warm, and fierce in
Rough Nature's children, humorous as she: [proudest tone
And He, yon Chieftain—strike the
Of thy bold harp, green Isle!—the Hero is thine own.

LXI.

Now on the scene Vimeira should be shown, [gaze,
On Talavera's fight should Roderick
And hear Corunna wail her battle won,
And see Busaco's crest with lightning blaze:— praise?
But shall fond fable mix with heroes'
Hath Fiction's stage for Truth's long triumphs room?
And dare her wild-flowers mingle with the bays,
That claim a long eternity to bloom
Around the warrior's crest, and o'er the warrior's tomb?

LXII.

Or may I give adventurous Fancy scope, [veil
And stretch a bold hand to the awful
That hides futurity from anxious hope,
Bidding beyond it scenes of glory hail,
And painting Europe rousing at the tale
Of Spain's invaders from her confines hurl'd, [mail,
While kindling nations buckle on their
And Fame, with clarion-blast and wings unfurl'd,
To Freedom and Revenge awakes an injured World?

LXIII.

O vain, though anxious, is the glance I cast, own:
Since Fate has mark'd futurity her
Yet Fate resigns to Worth the glorious past, won.
The deeds recorded, and the laurels
Then, though the Vault of Destiny* be gone, my brain,
King, Prelate, all the phantasms of
Melted away like mist-wreaths in the sun, [Spain,
Yet grant for faith, for valour, and for
One note of pride and fire, a Patriot's parting strain!

CONCLUSION.

I.

"Who shall command Estrella's mountain-tide [chafed, to hie?
Back to the source, when tempest-
Who, when Gascogne's vex'd gulf is raging wide, cry?
Shall hush it as a nurse her infant's
His magic power let such vain boaster try, [obey,
And when the torrent shall his voice
And Biscay's whirlwinds list his lullaby,
Let him stand forth and bar mine eagles' way, [bidding stay.
And they shall heed his voice, and at his

II.

"Else ne'er to stoop, till high on Lisbon's towers [our yoke,
They close their wings, the symbol of
And their own sea hath whelm'd yon red-cross Powers!" [rock,
Thus, on the summit of Alverca's
To Marshal, Duke, and Peer, Gaul's Leader spoke. [legions press,
While downward on the land his
Before them it was rich with vine and flock, [dress;—
And smiled like Eden in her summer
Behind their wasteful march a reeking wilderness.*

III.

And shall the boastful Chief maintain his word, [ings of the land,
Though Heaven hath heard the wail-
Though Lusitania whet her vengeful sword, [LINGTON command?
Though Britons arm, and WEL-
No! grim Busaco's iron ridge shall stand
An adamantine barrier to his force:
And from its base shall wheel his shatter'd band, [hoarse
As from the unshaken rock the torrent
Bears off its broken waves, and seeks a devious course.

IV.

Yet not because Alcoba's mountain-hawk [her food,
Hath on his best and bravest made
In numbers confident, yon Chief shall baulk [and blood:
His Lord's imperial thirst for spoil
For full in view the promised conquest stood, [might sum
And Lisbon's matrons from their walls
The myriads that had half the world subdued, [drum,
And hear the distant thunders of the
That bids the bands of France to storm and havoc come.

V.

Four moons have heard these thunders idly roll'd, [their prey,
Have seen these wistful myriads eye
As famish'd wolves survey a guarded fold—
But in the middle path a Lion lay!
At length they move—but not to battle-fray, [manly fight;
Nor blaze yon fires where meets the
Beacons of infamy, they light the way
Where cowardice and cruelty unite
To damn with double shame their ignominious flight!

VI.

O triumph for the Fiends of Lust and Wrath! [forgot,
Ne'er to be told, yet ne'er to be
What wanton horrors mark'd their wreckful path!— [cot,
The peasant butcher'd in his ruin'd
The hoary priest even at the altar shot,
Childhood and age given o'er to sword and flame,
Woman to infamy;—no crime forgot,
By which inventive demons might proclaim
Immortal hate to man, and scorn of God's great name!

VII.

The rudest sentinel, in Britain born,
With horror paused to view the havoc done, [forlorn,*
Gave his poor crust to feed some wretch
Wiped his stern eye, then fiercer grasp'd his gun. [ful son
Nor with less zeal shall Britain's peace-
Exult the debt of sympathy to pay;
Riches nor poverty the tax shall shun,
Nor prince nor peer, the wealthy nor the gay,
Nor the poor peasant's mite, nor bard's more worthless lay.

VIII.

But thou—unfoughten wilt thou yield to Fate, [vain!
Minion of Fortune, now miscall'd in
Can vantage-ground no confidence create, [tain-chain?
Marcella's pass, nor Guarda's moun-
Vainglorious fugitive!* yet turn again!
Behold, where, named by some prophetic Seer,
Flows Honour's Fountain,† as foredoom'd the stain
From thy dishonour'd name and arms to clear— [favour here!
Fallen Child of Fortune, turn, redeem her

† The literal translation of *Fuentes d'Honoro.*

IX.

Yet, ere thou turn'st, collect each distant aid; [roar!
Those chief that never heard the lion
Within whose souls lives not a trace portray'd
Of Talavera, or Mondego's shore!
Marshal each band thou hast, and summon more; [whole;
Of war's fell stratagems exhaust the
Rank upon rank, squadron on squadron pour,
Legion on legion on thy foeman roll,
And weary out his arm—thou canst not quell his soul.

X.

O vainly gleams with steel Agueda's shore, [plain,
Vainly thy squadrons hide Assuava's
And front the flying thunders as they roar,
With frantic charge and tenfold odds, in vain!* [slain,*
And what avails thee that, for CAMERON
Wild from his plaided ranks the yell was given—
Vengeance and grief gave mountain-rage the rein,
And, at the bloody spear-point headlong driven,
Thy Despot's giant guards fled like the rack of heaven.

XI.

Go, baffled boaster! teach thy haughty mood [throne;
To plead at thine imperious master's
Say, thou hast left his legions in their blood, [thine own;
Deceived his hopes, and frustrated
Say, that thine utmost skill and valour shown, [vied;
By British skill and valour were out-
Last say, thy conqueror was WELLINGTON! [tried—
And if he chafe, be his own fortune
God and our cause to friend, the venture we'll abide.

XII.

But you, ye heroes of that well-fought day, [unknown,
How shall a bard, unknowing and
His meed to each victorious leader pay,
Or bind on every brow the laurels won?
Yet fain my harp would wake its boldest tone, [brave;
O'er the wide sea to hail CADOGAN
And he, perchance, the minstrel-note might own, [tune gave
Mindful of meeting brief that For-
'Mid yon far western isles that hear the Atlantic rave.

XIII.

Yes! hard the task, when Britons wield the sword,
To give each Chief and every field its fame:
Hark! Albuera thunders BERESFORD!
And Red Barossa shouts for dauntless GRÆME!
O for a verse of tumult and of flame,
Bold as the bursting of their cannon sound,
To bid the world re-echo to their fame!
For never, upon gory battle-ground,
With conquest's well-bought wreath were braver victors crown'd!

XIV.

O who shall grudge him Albuera's bays,
Who brought a race regenerate to the field,
Roused them to emulate their fathers' praise,
Temper'd their headlong rage, their courage steel'd,*
And raised fair Lusitania's fallen shield,
And gave new edge to Lusitania's sword,
And taught her sons forgotten arms to wield—
Shiver'd my harp, and burst its every chord,
If it forget thy worth, victorious BERESFORD!

XV.

Not on that bloody field of battle won,
Though Gaul's proud legions roll'd like mist away,
Was half his self-devoted valour shown,—
He gaged but life on that illustrious day;
But when he toil'd those squadrons to array,
Who fought like Britons in the bloody game,
Sharper than Polish pike or assagay,
He braved the shafts of censure and of shame,
And, dearer far than life, he pledged a soldier's fame.

XVI.

Nor be his praise o'erpast who strove to hide
Beneath the warrior's vest affection's wound,
Whose wish Heaven for his country's weal denied;
Danger and fate he sought, but glory found.
From clime to clime, where'er war's trumpets sound,
The wanderer went; yet, Caledonia!
Thine was his thought in march and tented ground;
He dream'd 'mid Alpine cliffs of Athole's hill,
And heard in Ebro's roar his Lyndoch's lovely rill.

XVII.

O hero of a race renown'd of old,
Whose war-cry oft has waked the battle-swell,
Since first distinguish'd in the onset bold,
Wild sounding when the Roman rampart fell!
By Wallace' side it rung the Southron's knell,
Alderne, Kilsythe, and Tibber, own'd its fame,
Tummell's rude pass can of its terrors tell,
But ne'er from prouder field arose the name,
Than when wild Ronda learned the conquering shout of GRÆME!*

XVIII.

But all too long, through seas unknown and dark
(With Spenser's parable I close my tale),
By shoal and rock hath steer'd my venturous bark,
And landward now I drive before the gale.
And now the blue and distant shore I hail,
And nearer now I see the port expand,
And now I gladly furl my weary sail,
And as the prow light touches on the strand,
I strike my red-cross flag, and bind my skiff to land.

ROKEBY:

A POEM IN SIX CANTOS.

TO

JOHN B. S. MORRITT, ESQ.,

THIS POEM, THE SCENE OF WHICH IS LAID IN HIS BEAUTIFUL DEMESNE OF ROKEBY, IS INSCRIBED, IN TOKEN OF SINCERE FRIENDSHIP,

BY

WALTER SCOTT.

ADVERTISEMENT TO THE FIRST EDITION.

The Scene of this Poem is laid at Rokeby, near Greta Bridge, in Yorkshire, and shifts to the adjacent Fortress of Barnard Castle, and to other places in that Vicinity.

The Time occupied by the Action is a space of Five Days, Three of which are supposed to elapse between the end of the Fifth and the beginning of the Sixth Canto.

The date of the supposed events is immediately subsequent to the great Battle of Marston Moor, 3rd July, 1644. This period of public confusion has been chosen, without any purpose of combining the Fable with the Military or Political events of the Civil War, but only as affording a degree of probability to the Fictitious narrative now presented to the Public.

INTRODUCTION TO EDITION 1830.

BETWEEN the publication of "The Lady of the Lake," which was so eminently successful, and that of "Rokeby," in 1813, three years had intervened. I shall not, I believe, be accused of ever having attempted to usurp a superiority over many men of genius, my contemporaries; but, in point of popularity, not of actual talent, the caprice of the public had certainly given me such a temporary superiority over men of whom, in regard to poetical fancy and feeling, I scarcely thought myself worthy to loose the shoe-latch. On the other hand, it would be absurd affectation in me to deny, that I conceived myself to understand, more perfectly than many of my contemporaries, the manner most likely to interest the great mass of mankind. Yet, even with this belief, I must truly and fairly say, that I always considered myself rather as one who held the bets, in time to be paid over to the winner, than as having any pretence to keep them in my own right.

In the meantime years crept on, and not without their usual depredations on the passing generation. My sons had arrived at the age when the paternal home was no longer their best abode, as both were destined to active life. The field sports, to which I was peculiarly attached, had now less interest, and were replaced by other amusements of a more quiet character; and the means and opportunity of pursuing these were to be sought for. I had, indeed, for some years attended to farming, a knowledge of which is, or at least was then, indispensable to the comfort of a family residing in a solitary country-house; but although this was the favourite amusement of many of my friends, I have never been able to consider it as a source of pleasure.

I never could think it a matter of passing importance, that my cattle or crops were better or more plentiful than those of my neighbours, and nevertheless I began to feel the necessity of some more quiet out-door occupation, different from those I had hitherto pursued. I purchased a small farm of about one hundred acres, with the purpose of planting and improving it, to which property circumstances afterwards enabled me to make considerable additions; and thus an era took place in my life, almost equal to the important one mentioned by the Vicar of Wakefield, when he removed from the Blue-room to the Brown. In point of neighbourhood, at least, the change of residence made little *more* difference. Abbotsford, to which we removed, was only six or seven miles down the Tweed, and lay on the same beautiful stream. It did not possess the romantic character of Ashestiel, my former residence; but it had a stretch of meadow-land along the river, and possessed, in the phrase of the landscape-gardener, considerable capabilities. Above all, the land was my own, like Uncle Toby's Bowling-green, to do what I would with. It had been, though the gratification was long postponed, an early wish of mine to connect myself with my mother-earth, and prosecute those experiments by which a species of creative power is exercised over the face of nature. I can trace, even to childhood, a pleasure derived from Dodsley's account of Shenstone's Leasowes, and I envied the poet much more for the pleasure of accomplishing the objects detailed in his friend's sketch of his grounds, than for the possession of pipe, crook, flock, and Phillis to boot. My memory, also, tenacious of quaint expressions, still retained a phrase which it had gathered from an old almanack of Charles the Second's time (when everything down to almanacks affected to be smart), in which the reader, in the month of June, is advised, for health's sake, to walk a mile or two every day before breakfast, and, if he can possibly so manage, to let his exercise be taken upon his own land.

With the satisfaction of having attained the fulfilment of an early and long-cherished hope, I commenced my improvements, as delightful in their progress as those of the child who first makes a dress for a new doll. The nakedness of the land was in time hidden by woodlands of considerable extent—the smallest of possible cottages was progressively expanded into a sort of dream of a mansion-house, whimsical in the exterior, but convenient within. Nor did I forget what is the natural pleasure of every man who has been a reader, I mean the filling the shelves of a tolerably large library. All these objects I kept in view, to be executed as convenience should serve; and, although I knew many years must elapse before they could be attained, I was of a disposition to comfort myself with the Spanish proverb, "Time and I against any two."

The difficult and indispensable point, of finding a permanent subject of occupation, was now at length attained; but there was annexed to it the necessity of becoming again a candidate for public favour; for, as I was turned improver on the earth of the every-day world, it was under condition that the small tenement of Parnassus, which might be accessible to my labours, should not remain uncultivated.

I meditated, at first, a poem on the subject of Bruce, in which I made some progress, but afterwards judged it advisable to lay it aside, supposing that an English story might have more novelty; in consequence, the precedence was given to "Rokeby."

If subject and scenery could have influenced the fate of a poem, that of "Rokeby" should have been eminently distinguished; for the grounds belong to a dear friend, with whom I had lived in habits of intimacy for many years, and the place itself united the romantic beauties of the wilds of Scotland with the rich and smiling aspect of the southern portion of the island. But the Cavaliers and Roundheads, whom I attempted to summon up to tenant this beautiful region, had for the public neither the novelty nor the peculiar interest of the primitive Highlanders. This, perhaps, was scarcely to be expected, considering that the general mind sympathises readily and at once with the stamp which nature herself has affixed upon the manners of a people living in a simple and patriarchal state; whereas it has more difficulty in understanding or interesting itself in manners founded upon those peculiar habits of thinking or acting, which are produced by the progress of society. We could read with pleasure the tale of the adventures of a Cossack or a Mongol Tartar, while we only wonder and stare over those of the lovers in the "Pleasing Chinese History," where the embarrassments turn upon difficulties arising out of unintelligible delicacies peculiar to the customs and manners of that affected people.

The cause of my failure had, however, a far deeper root. The manner, or style, which, by its novelty, attracted the public in an unusual degree, had now, after having been three times before them, exhausted the patience of the reader, and began in the fourth to lose its charms. The reviewers may be said to have apostrophised the author in the language of Parnell's Edwin:—

> "And here reverse the charm, he cries,
> And let it fairly now suffice,
> The gambol has been shown."

The licentious combination of rhymes, in a manner not perhaps very congenial to our language, had not been confined to the author. Indeed, in most similar cases, the inventors of such novelties have their reputation destroyed by their own imitators, as Actæon fell under the fury of his own dogs. The present author, like Bobadil, had taught his trick of fence to a hundred gentlemen (and ladies), who could fence very nearly, or quite, as well as himself. For this there was no remedy; the harmony became tiresome and ordinary, and both the original

inventor and his invention must have fallen into contempt, if he had not found out another road to public favour. What has been said of the metre only, must be considered to apply equally to the structure of the Poem and of the style. The very best passages of any popular style are not, perhaps, susceptible of imitation, but they may be approached by men of talent; and those who are less able to copy them, at least lay hold of their peculiar features, so as to produce a strong burlesque. In either way, the effect of the manner is rendered cheap and common; and, in the latter case, ridiculous to boot. The evil consequences to an author's reputation are at least as fatal as those which come upon the musical composer, when his melody falls into the hands of the street ballad-singer.

Of the unfavourable species of imitation, the author's style gave room to a very large number, owing to an appearance of facility to which some of those who used the measure unquestionably leaned too far. The effect of the more favourable imitations, composed by persons of talent, was almost equally unfortunate to the original minstrel, by showing that they could overshoot him with his own bow. In short, the popularity which once attended the *School*, as it was called, was now fast decaying.

Besides all this, to have kept his ground at the crisis when "Rokeby" appeared, its author ought to have put forth his utmost strength, and to have possessed at least all his original advantages, for a mighty and unexpected rival was advancing on the stage—a rival not in poetical powers only, but in that art of attracting popularity, in which the present writer had hitherto preceded better men than himself. The reader will easily see that Byron is here meant, who, after a little velitation of no great promise, now appeared as a serious candidate, in the "First Two Cantos of Childe Harold." I was astonished at the power evinced by that work, which neither the "Hours of Idleness" nor the "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers" had prepared me to expect from its author. There was a depth in his thought, an eager abundance in his diction, which argued full confidence in the inexhaustible resources of which he felt himself possessed; and there was some appearance of that labour of the file, which indicates that the author is conscious of the necessity of doing every justice to his work, that it may pass warrant. Lord Byron was also a traveller, a man whose ideas were fired by having seen, in distant scenes of difficulty and danger, the places whose very names are recorded in our bosoms as the shrines of ancient poetry. For his own misfortune, perhaps, but certainly to the high increase of his poetical character, nature had mixed in Lord Byron's system those passions which agitate the human heart with most violence, and which may be said to have hurried his bright career to an early close. There would have been little wisdom in measuring my force with so formidable an antagonist: and I was as likely to tire of playing second fiddle in the concert, as my audience of hearing me. Age also was advancing. I was growing insensible to those subjects of excitation by which youth is agitated. I had around me the most pleasant but least exciting of all society, that of kind friends and an affectionate family. My circle of employments was a narrow one; it occupied me constantly, and it became daily more difficult for me to interest myself in poetical composition:—

"How happily the days of Thalaba went by!"

Yet, though conscious that I must be, in the opinion of good judges, inferior to the place I had for four or five years held in letters, and feeling alike that the latter was one to which I had only a temporary right, I could not brook the idea of relinquishing literary occupation, which had been so long my chief diversion. Neither was I disposed to choose the alternative of sinking into a mere editor and commentator, though that was a species of labour which I had practised, and to which I was attached. But I could not endure to think that I might not, whether known or concealed, do something of more importance. My inmost thoughts were those of the Trojan Captain in the galley race:—

> Non jam, prima peto Mnestheus, neque vincere certo;
> Quanquam O!—sed superent, quibus hoc, Neptune, dedisti;
> Extremos pudeat rediisse: hoc vincite, cives,
> Et prohibete nefas."*—ÆN. lib. v. 194.

I had, indeed, some private reasons for my "Quanquam O!" which were not worse than those of Mnestheus. I have already hinted that the materials were collected for a poem on the subject of Bruce, and fragments of it had been shown to some of my friends, and received with applause. Notwithstanding, therefore, the eminent success of Byron, and the great chance of his taking the wind out of my sails, there was, I judged, a species of cowardice in desisting from the task which I had undertaken, and it was time enough to retreat when the battle should be more decidedly lost. The sale of "Rokeby," excepting as compared with that of "The Lady of the Lake," was in the highest degree respectable; and as it included fifteen hundred quartos, in those quarto-reading days, the trade had no reason to be dissatisfied.

W. S.

ABBOTSFORD, *April, 1830.*

* "I seek not now the foremost palm to gain:
Though yet—but ah! that haughty wish is vain!
Let those enjoy it whom the gods ordain.
But to be last, the lags of all the race!—
Redeem yourselves and me from that disgrace."—DRYDEN.

ROKEBY.

CANTO FIRST.

I.

THE moon is in her summer glow,
But hoarse and high the breezes blow,
And, racking o'er her face, the cloud
Varies the tincture of her shroud;
On Barnard's towers, and Tees's stream,*
She changes as a guilty dream,
When conscience, with remorse and fear,
Goads sleeping Fancy's wild career.
Her light seems now the blush of shame,
Seems now fierce anger's darker flame,
Shifting that shade, to come and go,
Like apprehension's hurried glow;
Then sorrow's livery dims the air,
And dies in darkness, like despair.
Such varied hues the warder sees
Reflected from the woodland Tees,
Then from old Baliol's tower looks forth,
See the clouds mustering in the north,
Hears, upon turret-roof and wall,
By fits the plashing rain-drop fall,
Lists to the breeze's boding sound,
And wraps his shaggy mantle round.

II.

Those towers, which in the changeful gleam
Throw murky shadows on the stream,
Those towers of Barnard hold a guest,
The emotions of whose troubled breast,
In wild and strange confusion driven,
Rival the flitting rack of heaven.
Ere sleep stern OSWALD's senses tied,
Oft had he changed his weary side,
Composed his limbs, and vainly sought
By effort strong to banish thought.
Sleep came at length, but with a train
Of feelings true and fancies vain,
Mingling, in wild disorder cast,
The expected future with the past.
Conscience, anticipating time,
Already rues the enacted crime,
And calls her furies forth, to shake
The sounding scourge and hissing snake;
While her poor victim's outward throes
Bear witness to his mental woes,
And show what lesson may be read
Beside a sinner's restless bed.

III.

Thus Oswald's labouring feelings trace
Strange changes in his sleeping face,
Rapid and ominous as these [Tees.
With which the moonbeams tinge the
There might be seen of shame the blush,
There anger's dark and fiercer flush,
While the perturbèd sleeper's hand
Seem'd grasping dagger-knife, or brand.
Relax'd that grasp, the heavy sigh,
The tear in the half-opening eye,
The pallid cheek and brow, confess'd
That grief was busy in his breast;
Nor paused that mood—a sudden start
Impell'd the life-blood from the heart:
Features convulsed, and mutterings dread,
Show terror reigns in sorrow's stead.
That pang the painful slumber broke,
And Oswald with a start awoke.

IV.

He woke, and fear'd again to close
His eyelids in such dire repose;
He woke,—to watch the lamp, and tell
From hour to hour the castle-bell.
Or listen to the owlet's cry,
Or the sad breeze that whistles by,
Or catch, by fits, the tuneless rhyme
With which the warder cheats the time,
And envying think, how, when the sun
Bids the poor soldier's watch be done,
Couch'd on his straw, and fancy free,
He sleeps like careless infancy.

V.

Far townward sounds a distant tread,
And Oswald, starting from his bed,
Hath caught it, though no human ear,
Unsharpen'd by revenge and fear,
Could e'er distinguish horse's clank,
Until it reach'd the castle bank.
Now nigh and plain the sound appears,
The warder's challenge now he hears,
Then clanking chains and levers tell,
That o'er the moat the drawbridge fell,

* An asterisk in these pages signifies that a note upon the passage is to be found at the end of the volume.

And, in the castle court below,
Voices are heard, and torches glow,
As marshalling the stranger's way,
Straight for the room where Oswald lay;
The cry was,—"Tidings from the host,
Of weight—a messenger comes post."
Stifling the tumult of his breast,
His answer Oswald thus express'd—
"Bring food and wine, and trim the fire;
Admit the stranger, and retire."

VI.

The stranger came with heavy stride,
The morion's plumes his visage hide,
And the buff-coat, an ample fold,
Mantles his form's gigantic mould.*
Full slender answer deignèd he
To Oswald's anxious courtesy,
But mark'd, by a disdainful smile,
He saw and scorn'd the petty wile,
When Oswald chang'd the torch's place,
Anxious that on the soldier's face
Its partial lustre might be thrown,
To show his looks, yet hide his own.
His guest, the while, laid low aside
The ponderous cloak of tough bull's hide,
And to the torch glanced broad and clear
The corslet of a cuirassier;
Then from his brows the casque he drew,
And from the dank plume dash'd the dew,
From gloves of mail relieved his hands,
And spread them to the kindling brands,
And, turning to the genial board,
Without a health, or pledge, or word
Of meet and social reverence said,
Deeply he drank, and fiercely fed;
As free from ceremony's sway,
As famish'd wolf that tears his prey.

VII.

With deep impatience, tinged with fear,
His host beheld him gorge his cheer,
And quaff the full carouse, that lent
His brow a fiercer hardiment.
Now Oswald stood a space aside,
Now paced the room with hasty stride,
In feverish agony to learn
Tidings of deep and dread concern,
Cursing each moment that his guest
Protracted o'er his ruffian feast.
Yet, viewing with alarm, at last,
The end of that uncouth repast,
Almost he seemed their haste to rue,
As, at his sign, his train withdrew,
And left him with the stranger, free
To question of his mystery.
Then did his silence long proclaim
A struggle between fear and shame.

VIII.

Much in the stranger's mien appears,
To justify suspicious fears.
On his dark face a scorching clime,
And toil, had done the work of time,
Roughen'd the brow, the temples bared,
And sable hairs with silver shared,
Yet left—what age alone could tame—
The lip of pride, the eye of flame;
The full-drawn lip that upward curl'd,
The eye that seem'd to scorn the world.
That lip had terror never blench'd;
Ne'er in that eye had tear-drop quench'd
The flash severe of swarthy glow,
That mock'd at pain, and knew not woe.
Inured to danger's direst form,
Tornade and earthquake, flood and storm,
Death had he seen by sudden blow,
By wasting plague, by tortures slow,*
By mine or breach, by steel or ball,
Knew all his shapes, and scorn'd them all.

IX.

But yet, though BERTRAM'S harden'd look,
Unmoved could blood and danger brook,
Still worse than apathy had place
On his swart brow and callous face;
For evil passions, cherish'd long,
Had plough'd them with impressions strong,
All that gives gloss to sin, all gay
Light folly, past with youth away,
But rooted stood, in manhood's hour,
The weeds of vice without their flower.
And yet the soil in which they grew,
Had it been tamed when life was new,
Had depth and vigour to bring forth
The hardier fruits of virtuous worth.
Not that, e'en then, his heart had known
The gentler feelings' kindly tone;
But lavish waste had been refined
To bounty in his chasten'd mind,
And lust of gold, that waste to feed,
Been lost in love of glory's meed,
And, frantic then no more, his pride
Had ta'en fair virtue for its guide.

X.

Even now, by conscience unrestrain'd,
Clogg'd by gross vice, by slaughter stain'd,
Still knew his daring soul to soar,
And mastery o'er the mind he bore;
For meaner guilt, or heart less hard,
Quail'd beneath Bertram's bold regard.
And this felt Oswald, while in vain
He strove, by many a winding train,
To lure his sullen guest to show,
Unask'd, the news he long'd to know,
While on far other subject hung
His heart, than falter'd from his tongue.
Yet nought for that his guest did deign
To note or spare his secret pain,
But still, in stern and stubborn sort,
Return'd him answer dark and short,

Or started from the theme, to range
In loose digression wild and strange,
And forced the embarrass'd host to buy,
By query close, direct reply.

XI.

A while he glozed upon the cause
Of Commons, Covenant, and Laws,
And Church Reform'd—but felt rebuke
Beneath grim Bertram's sneering look,
Then stammer'd—"Has a field been fought?
Has Bertram news of battle brought?
For sure a soldier, famed so far
In foreign fields for feats of war,
On eve of fight ne'er left the host,
Until the field were won and lost."
"Here, in your towers by circling Tees,
You, Oswald Wycliffe, rest at ease;
Why deem it strange that others come
To share such safe and easy home,
From fields where danger, death, and toil,
Are the reward of civil broil?"—
"Nay, mock not, friend! since well we know
The near advances of the foe,
To mar our northern army's work,
Encamp'd before beleaguer'd York;
Thy horse with valiant Fairfax lay,
And must have fought—how went the day?"—

XII.

"Wouldst hear the tale?—On Marston heath*
Met, front to front, the ranks of death;
Flourish'd the trumpets fierce, and now
Fired was each eye, and flush'd each brow;
On either side loud clamours ring,
'God and the Cause!'—'God and the King!'
Right English all, they rush'd to blows,
With nought to win, and all to lose.
I could have laugh'd—but lack'd the time—
To see, in phrenesy sublime,
How the fierce zealots fought and bled
For king or state, as humour led;
Some for a dream of public good,
Some for church-tippet, gown, and hood,
Draining their veins, in death to claim
A patriot's or a martyr's name.—
Led Bertram Risingham the hearts,
That counter'd there on adverse parts,
No superstitious fool had I
Sought El Dorados in the sky!
Chili had heard me through her states,
And Lima oped her silver gates,
Rich Mexico I had march'd through,
And sack'd the splendours of Peru,
Till sunk Pizarro's daring name,
And, Cortez, thine, in Bertram's fame."—
"Still from the purpose wilt thou stray!
Good gentle friend, how went the day?"—

XIII.

"Good am I deem'd at trumpet-sour
And good where goblets dance the ro
Though gentle ne'er was join'd, till n
With rugged Bertram's breastand bro
But I resume. The battle's rage
Was like the strife which currents w
Where Orinoco, in his pride,
Rolls to the main no tribute tide,
But 'gainst broad ocean urges far
A rival sea of roaring war;
While, in ten thousand eddies driven,
The billows fling their foam to heaven,
And the pale pilot seeks in vain,
Where rolls the river, where the main.
Even thus upon the bloody field,
The eddying tides of conflict wheel'd
Ambiguous, till that heart of flame,
Hot Rupert, on our squadrons came,
Hurling against our spears a line
Of gallants, fiery as their wine;
Then ours, though stubborn in their zeal,
In zeal's despite began to reel.
What wouldst thou more?—in tumult tost,
Our leaders fell, our ranks were lost.
A thousand men, who drew the sword
For both the Houses and the Word,
Preach'd forth from hamlet, grange, and down,
To curb the crosier and the crown,
Now, stark and stiff, lie stretch'd in gore,
And ne'er shall rail at mitre more.—
Thus fared it, when I left the fight,
With the good Cause and Commons' right."—

XIV.

"Disastrous news!" dark Wycliffe said;
Assumed despondence bent his head,
While troubled joy was in his eye,
The well-feign'd sorrow to belie.—
"Disastrous news—when needed most,
Told ye not that your chiefs were lost?
Complete the woful tale, and say
Who fell upon that fatal day;
What leaders of repute and name
Bought by their death a deathless fame.
If such my direst foeman's doom,
My tears shall dew his honour'd tomb.—
No answer?—Friend, of all our host,
Thou know'st whom I should hate the most,
Whom thou, too, once wert wont to hate,
Yet leav'st me doubtful of his fate."
With look unmoved,—"Of friend or foe,
Aught," answer'd Bertram, "would'st thou know,
Demand in simple terms and plain,
A soldier's answer shalt thou gain;—
For question dark, or riddle high,
I have not judgment nor reply."

XV.

The wrath his art and fear suppress'd,
Now blazed at once in Wycliffe's breast;
And brave, from man so meanly born,
Roused his hereditary scorn.
"Wretch! hast thou paid thy bloody debt?
PHILIP OF MORTHAM, lives he yet?
False to thy patron or thine oath,
Trait'rous or perjured, one or both,
Slave! hast thou kept thy promise plight,
To slay thy leader in the fight?"
Then from his seat the soldier sprung,
And Wycliffe's hand he strongly wrung;
His grasp, as hard as glove of mail,
Forced the red blood-drop from the nail—
"A health!" he cried; and, ere he quaff'd,
Flung from him Wycliffe's hand, and laugh'd: [heart!
—"Now, Oswald Wycliffe, speaks thy
Now play'st thou well thy genuine part!
Worthy, but for thy craven fear,
Like me to roam a buccanier.
What reck'st thou of the Cause divine,
If Mortham's wealth and lands be thine?
What carest thou for beleagur'd York,
If this good hand have done its work?
Or what though Fairfax and his best
Are reddening Marston's swarthy breast,
If Philip Mortham with them lie,
Lending his life-blood to the dye?—
Sit, then! and as 'mid comrades free
Carousing after victory,
When tales are told of blood and fear,
That boys and women shrink to hear,
From point to point I frankly tell
The deed of death as it befell.

XVI.

"When purposed vengeance I forego,
Term me a wretch, nor deem me foe;
And when an insult I forgive,
Then brand me as a slave, and live!—
Philip of Mortham is with those
Whom Bertram Risingham calls foes;
Or whom more sure revenge attends,
If number'd with ungrateful friends.
As was his wont, ere battle glow'd,
Along the marshall'd ranks he rode,
And wore his visor up the while.
I saw his melancholy smile,
When, full opposed in front, he knew
Where ROKEBY's kindred banner flew.
'And thus,' he said, 'will friends divide!'—
I heard, and thought how, side by side,
We two had turn'd the battle's tide,
In many a well-debated field,
Where Bertram's breast was Philip's shield.
I thought on Darien's deserts pale,
Where death bestrides the evening gale;
How o'er my friend my cloak I threw,
And fenceless faced the deadly dew;
I thought on Quariana's cliff,
Where, rescued from our foundering skiff,
Through the white breakers' wrath I bore
Exhausted Mortham to the shore;
And when his side an arrow found,
I suck'd the Indian's venom'd wound.
These thoughts like torrents rush'd along,
To sweep away my purpose strong.

XVII.

"Hearts are not flint, and flints are rent;
Hearts are not steel, and steel is bent.
When Mortham bade me, as of yore,
Be near him in the battle's roar,
I scarcely saw the spears laid low,
I scarcely heard the trumpets blow;
Lost was the war in inward strife,
Debating Mortham's death or life.
'Twas then I thought, how, lured to come,
As partner of his wealth and home,
Years of piratic wandering o'er,
With him I sought our native shore.
But Mortham's lord grew far estranged
From the bold heart with whom he ranged;
Doubts, horrors, superstitious fears,
Sadden'd and dimm'd descending years;
The wily priests their victim sought,
And damn'd each free-born deed and thought,
Then must I seek another home,
My license shook his sober dome;
If gold he gave, in one wild day
I revell'd thrice the sum away.
An idle outcast then I stray'd,
Unfit for tillage or for trade;
Deem'd, like the steel of rusted lance,
Useless and dangerous at once.
The women fear'd my hardy look,
At my approach the peaceful shook;
The merchant saw my glance of flame,
And lock'd his hoards when Bertram came;
Each child of coward peace kept far
From the neglected son of war.

XVIII.

"But civil discord gave the call,
And made my trade the trade of all.
By Mortham urged, I came again
His vassals to the fight to train.
What guerdon waited on my care?
I could not cant of creed or prayer;
Sour fanatics each trust obtain'd,
And I, dishonour'd and disdain'd,
Gain'd but the high and happy lot,
In these poor arms to front the shot!—
All this thou know'st, thy gestures tell;
Yet hear it o'er, and mark it well.
'Tis honour bids me now relate
Each circumstance of Mortham's fate.

XIX.

"Thoughts, from the tongue that slowly part, [heart,
Glance quick as lightning through the

As thy spur press'd my courser's side,
Philip of Mortham's cause was tried,
And, ere the charging squadrons mix'd,
His plea was cast, his doom was fix'd.
I watch'd him through the doubtful fray,
That changed as March's moody day,
Till, like a stream that bursts its bank,
Fierce Rupert thunder'd on our flank.
'Twas then, 'midst tumult, smoke, and strife,
Where each man fought for death or life,
'Twas then I fired my petronel,
And Mortham, steed and rider, fell.
One dying look he upward cast,
Of wrath and anguish—'twas his last.
Think not that there I stopp'd, to view
What of the battle should ensue;
But ere I clear'd that bloody press,
Our northern horse ran masterless;
Monckton and Mitton told the news,
How troops of roundheads choked the Ouse,
And many a bonny Scot, aghast, [Ouse,
Spurring his palfrey northward, past,
Cursing the day when zeal or meed
First lured their Leslie o'er the Tweed.*
Yet when I reach'd the banks of Swale,
Had rumour learn'd another tale;
With his barb'd horse, fresh tidings say,
Stout Cromwell has redeem'd the day:*
But whether false the news, or true
Oswald, I reck as light as you."

XX.

Not then by Wycliffe might be shown,
How his pride startled at the tone
In which his complice, fierce and free,
Asserted guilt's equality.
In smoothest terms his speech he wove,
Of endless friendship, faith, and love;
Promised and vow'd in courteous sort,
But Bertram broke professions short.
"Wycliffe, be sure not here I stay,
No, scarcely till the rising day;
Warn'd by the legends of my youth,
I trust not an associate's truth.
Do not my native dales prolong
Of Percy Rede the tragic song,
Train'd forward to his bloody fall,
By Girsonfield, that treacherous Hall?*
Oft, by the Pringle's haunted side,
The shepherd sees his spectre glide.
And near the spot that gave me name,
The moated mound of Risingham,
Where Reed upon her margin sees
Sweet Woodburne's cottages and trees,
Some ancient sculptor's art has shown
An outlaw's image on the stone;*
Unmatch'd in strength, a giant he,
With quiver'd back, and kirtled knee.
Ask how he died, that hunter bold,
The tameless monarch of the wold,
And age and infancy can tell,
By brother's treachery he fell.
Thus warn'd by legends of my youth,
I trust to no associate's truth.

XXI.

"When last we reason'd of this deed,
Nought, I bethink me, was agreed,
Or by what rule, or when, or where,
The wealth of Mortham we should share;
Then list, while I the portion name,
Our differing laws give each to claim.
Thou, vassal sworn to England's throne,
Her rules of heritage must own;
They deal thee, as to nearest heir,
Thy kinsman's lands and livings fair,
And these I yield:—do thou revere
The statutes of the Buccanier.*
Friend to the sea, and foeman sworn
To all that on her waves are borne,
When falls a mate in battle broil,
His comrade heirs his portion'd spoil;
When dies in fight a daring foe,
He claims his wealth who struck the blow;
And either rule to me assigns
Those spoils of Indian seas and mines,
Hoarded in Mortham's caverns dark;
Ingot of gold and diamond spark,
Chalice and plate from churches borne,
And gems from shrieking beauty torn,
Each string of pearl, each silver bar,
And all the wealth of western war.
I go to search, where, dark and deep,
Those Trans-atlantic treasures sleep.
Thou must along—for, lacking thee,
The heir will scarce find entrance free;
And then farewell. I haste to try
Each varied pleasure wealth can buy;
When cloy'd each wish, these wars afford
Fresh work for Bertram's restless sword."

XXII.

An undecided answer hung
On Oswald's hesitating tongue.
Despite his craft, he heard with awe
This ruffian stabber fix the law;
While his own troubled passions veer
Though hatred, joy, regret, and fear:—
Joy'd at the soul that Bertram flies,
He grudged the murderer's mighty prize,
Hated his pride's presumptuous tone,
And fear'd to wend with him alone.
At length, that middle course to steer,
To cowardice and craft so dear,
"His charge," he said, "would ill allow
His absence from the fortress now;
WILFRID on Bertram should attend,
His son should journey with his friend."

XXIII.

Contempt kept Bertram's anger down,
And wreathed to savage smile his frown.

"Wilfrid, or thou—'tis one to me,
Whichever bears the golden key.
Yet think not but I mark, and smile
To mark, thy poor and selfish wile!
If injury from me you fear,
What, Oswald Wycliffe, shields thee here?
I've sprung from walls more high than these, [Tees.
I've swam through deeper streams than
Might I not stab thee ere one yell
Could rouse the distant sentinel?
Start not—it is not my design,
But, if it were, weak fence were thine;
And, trust me, that, in time of need,
This hand hath done more desperate deed.
Go, haste and rouse thy slumbering son;
Time calls, and I must needs be gone."

XXIV.

Nought of his sire's ungenerous part
Polluted Wilfrid's gentle heart;
A heart too soft from early life
To hold with fortune needful strife.
His sire, while yet a hardier race
Of numerous sons were Wycliffe's grace,
On Wilfrid set contemptuous brand,
For feeble heart and forceless hand;
But a fond mother's care and joy
Were centred in her sickly boy.
No touch of childhood's frolic mood
Show'd the elastic spring of blood;
Hour after hour he loved to pore
On Shakspere's rich and varied lore,
But turn'd from martial scenes and light,
From Falstaff's feast and Percy's fight,
To ponder Jacques' moral strain,
And muse with Hamlet, wise in vain;
And weep himself to soft repose
O'er gentle Desdemona's woes.

XXV.

In youth he sought not pleasures found
By youth in horse, and hawk, and hound,
But loved the quiet joys that wake
By lonely stream and silent lake;
In Deepdale's solitude to lie,
Where all is cliff and copse and sky;
To climb Catcastle's dizzy peak,
Or lone Pendragon's mound to seek.
Such was his wont; and there his dream
Soar'd on some wild fastastic theme,
Of faithful love, or ceaseless spring,
Till Contemplation's wearied wing
The enthusiast could no more sustain,
And said he sunk to earth again.

XXVI.

He loved—as many a lay can tell,
Preserved in Stanmore's lovely dell;
For his was minstrel's skill, he caught
The art unteachable, untaught;
He loved—his soul did nature frame
For love, and fancy nursed the flame;
Vainly he loved—for seldom swain
Of such soft mould is loved again;
Silent he loved—in every gaze
Was passion, friendship in his phrase.
So mused his life away—till died
His brethren all, their father's pride.
Wilfrid is now the only heir
Of all his stratagems and care,
And destined, darkling, to pursue
Ambition's maze by Oswald's clue.

XXVII.

Wilfrid must love and woo the bright
Matilda, heir of Rokeby's knight.
To love her was an easy hest,
The secret empress of his breast;
To woo her was a harder task
To one that durst not hope or ask.
Yet all Matilda could, she gave
In pity to her gentle slave;
Friendship, esteem, and fair regard,
And praise, the poet's best reward!
She read the tales his taste approved,
And sung the lays he framed or loved;
Yet, loath to nurse the fatal flame
Of hopeless love in friendship's name,
In kind caprice she oft withdrew
The favouring glance to friendship due,
Then grieved to see her victim's pain,
And gave the dangerous smiles again.

XXVIII.

So did the suit of Wilfrid stand,
When war's loud summons waked the land.
Three banners, floating o'er the Tees,
The woe-foreboding peasant sees;
In concert oft they braved of old
The bordering Scot's incursion bold;
Frowning defiance in their pride,
Their vassals now and lords divide.
From his fair hall on Greta banks,
The Knight of Rokeby led his ranks,
To aid the valiant northern Earls,
Who drew the sword for royal Charles.
Mortham, by marriage near allied,—
His sister had been Rokeby's bride,
Though long before the civil fray,
In peaceful grave the lady lay,—
Philip of Mortham raised his band,
And march'd at Fairfax's command;
While Wycliffe, bound by many a train
Of kindred art with wily Vane,
Less prompt to brave the bloody field,
Made Barnard's battlements his shield,
Secured them with his Lunedale powers,
And for the Commons held the towers.

XXIX.

The lovely heir of Rokeby's Knight
Waits in his halls the event of fight;
For England's war revered the claim
Of every unprotected name,

And spared, amid its fiercest rage,
Childhood and womanhood and age.
But Wilfrid, son to Rokeby's foe,
Must the dear privilege forego,
By Greta's side, in evening grey,
To steal upon Matilda's way,
Striving, with fond hypocrisy,
For careless step and vacant eye;
Calming each anxious look and glance,
To give the meeting all to chance,
Or framing, as a fair excuse,
The book, the pencil, or the muse;
Something to give, to sing, to say,
Some modern tale, some ancient lay.
Then, while the long'd-for minutes last,—
Ah! minutes quickly over-past!—
Recording each expression free,
Of kind or careless courtesy,
Each friendly look, each softer tone,
As food for fancy when alone.
All this is o'er—but still, unseen,
Wilfrid may lurk in Eastwood green,
To watch Matilda's wonted round,
While springs his heart at every sound.
She comes!—'tis but a passing sight,
Yet serves to cheat his weary night;
She comes not—He will wait the hour,
When her lamp lightens in the tower;
'Tis something yet, if, as she past,
Her shade is o'er the lattice cast.
"What is my life, my hope?" he said;
"Alas! a transitory shade."

XXX.

Thus wore his life, though reason strove
For mastery in vain with love,
Forcing upon his thoughts the sum
Of present woe and ills to come,
While still he turn'd impatient ear
From Truth's intrusive voice severe.
Gentle, indifferent, and subdued,
In all but this, unmoved he view'd
Each outward change of ill and good:
But Wilfrid, docile, soft, and mild,
Was Fancy's spoil'd and wayward child;
In her bright car she bade him ride,
With one fair form to grace his side,
Or, in some wild and lone retreat,
Flung her high spells around his seat,
Bathed in her dews his languid head,
Her fairy mantle o'er him spread,
For him her opiates gave to flow,
Which he who tastes can ne'er forego,
And placed him in her circle, free
From every stern reality,
Till, to the Visionary, seem
Her day-dreams truth, and truth a dream.

XXXI.

Woe to the youth whom Fancy gains,
Winning from Reason's hand the reins,
Pity and woe! for such a mind
Is soft, contemplative, and kind;
And woe to those who train such youth,
And spare to press the rights of truth,
The mind to strengthen and anneal,
While on the stithy glows the steel!
O teach him, while your lessons last,
To judge the present by the past;
Remind him of each wish pursued,
How rich it glow'd with promised good;
Remind him of each wish enjoy'd,
How soon his hopes possession cloy'd!
Tell him, we play unequal game,
Whene'er we shoot by Fancy's aim;
And, ere he strip him for her race,
Show the conditions of the chase.
Two sisters by the goal are set,
Cold Disappointment and Regret;
One disenchants the winner's eyes,
And strips of all its worth the prize;
While one augments its gaudy show,
More to enhance the loser's woe.
The victor sees his fairy gold,
Transform'd, when won, to drossy mold;
But still the vanquish'd mourns his loss,
And rues, as gold, that glittering dross.

XXXII.

More wouldst thou know—yon tower survey,
Yon couch unpress'd since parting day,
Yon untrimm'd lamp, whose yellow gleam
Is mingling with the cold moonbeam,
And yon thin form!—the hectic red
On his pale cheek unequal spread;
The head reclined, the loosen'd hair,
The limbs relax'd, the mournful air.—
See, he looks up;—a woeful smile
Lightens his woe-worn cheek a while,—
'Tis Fancy wakes some idle thought,
To gild the ruin she has wrought;
For, like the bat of Indian brakes,
Her pinions fan the wound she makes,
And soothing thus the dreamer's pain,
She drinks his life-blood from the vein.
Now to the lattice turn his eyes,
Vain hope! to see the sun arise.
The moon with clouds is still o'ercast,
Still howls by fits the stormy blast;
Another hour must wear away,
Ere the East kindle into day,
And hark! to waste that weary hour,
He tries the minstrel's magic power.

XXXIII.

SONG.

To the Moon.

Hail to thy cold and clouded beam,
Pale pilgrim of the troubled sky!
Hail, though the mists that o'er thee stream
Lend to thy brow their sullen dye!

How should thy pure and peaceful eye
Untroubled view our scenes below,
Or how a tearless beam supply
To light a world of war and woe!

Fair Queen! I will not blame thee now,
As once by Greta's fairy side
Each little cloud that dimm'd thy brow
Did then an angel's beauty hide.
And of the shades I then could chide,
Still are the thoughts to memory dear,
For, while a softer strain I tried,
They hid my blush, and calm'd my fear.

Then did I swear thy ray serene
Was form'd to light some lonely dell,
By two fond lovers only seen,
Reflected from the crystal well,
Or sleeping on their mossy cell,
Or quivering on the lattice bright,
Or glancing on their couch, to tell
How swiftly wanes the summer night!

XXXIV.

He starts—a step at this lone hour!
A voice!—his father seeks the tower,
With haggard look and troubled sense,
Fresh from his dreadful conference.
"Wilfrid!—what, not to sleep address'd?
Thou hast no cares to chase thy rest.
Mortham has fall'n on Marston-moor;
Bertram brings warrant to secure
His treasures, bought by spoil and blood,
For the State's use and public good.
The menials will thy voice obey;
Let his commission have its way,
In every point, in every word."—
Then, in a whisper,—"Take thy sword;
Bertram is—what I must not tell.
I hear his hasty step—farewell!"

CANTO SECOND.

I.

FAR in the chambers of the west,
The gale had sigh'd itself to rest;
The moon was cloudless now and clear,
But pale, and soon to disappear.
The thin grey clouds wax dimly light
On Brusleton and Houghton height,
And the rich dale, that eastward lay,
Waited the wakening touch of day,
To give its woods and cultured plain,
And towers and spires, to light again.
But, westward, Stanmore's shapeless swell,
And Lunedale wild, and Kelton-fell,
And rock-begirdled Gilmanscar,
And Arkingarth, lay dark afar;
While, as a livelier twilight falls,
Emerge proud Barnard's banner'd walls.
High crown'd he sits, in dawning pale,
The sovereign of the lovely vale.

II.

What prospects, from his watch-tower high,
Gleam gradual on the warder's eye!—
Far sweeping to the east, he sees
Down his deep woods the course of Tees,*
And tracks his wanderings by the steam
Of summer vapours from the stream;
And ere he paced his destined hour
By Brackenbury's dungeon-tower,
These silver mists shall melt away,
And dew the woods with glittering spray.
Then in broad lustre shall be shown
That mighty trench of living stone,
And each huge trunk that, from the side,
Reclines him o'er the darksome tide,
Where Tees, full many a fathom low,
Wears with his rage no common foe;
For pebbly bank, nor sand-bed here,
Nor clay-mound, checks his fierce career,
Condemn'd to mine a channell'd way,
O'er solid sheets of marble grey.

III.

Nor Tees alone, in dawning bright,
Shall rush upon the ravish'd sight;
But many a tributary stream
Each from its own dark dell shall gleam:
Staindrop, who, from her sylvan bowers,
Salutes proud Raby's battled towers;
The rural brook of Egliston,
And Balder, named from Odin's son;
And Greta, to whose banks ere long
We lead the lovers of the song;
And silver Lune, from Stanmore wild,
And fairy Thorsgill's murmuring child;
And last and least, but loveliest still,
Romantic Deepdale's slender rill.
Who in that dim-wood glen hath stray'd,
Yet long'd for Roslin's magic glade?
Who, wandering there, hath sought to change,
Even for that vale so stern and strange,
Where Cartland's Crags, fantastic rent,
Through her green copse like spires are sent?
Yet, Albin, yet the praise be thine,
Thy scenes and story to combine!
Thou bidd'st him, who by Roslin strays,
List to the deeds of other days;
'Mid Cartland's Crags thou show'st the cave,
The refuge of thy champion brave;†
Giving each rock its storied tale,
Pouring a lay for every dale,
Knitting, as with a moral band,
Thy native legends with thy land,
To lend each scene the interest high
Which genius beams from Beauty's eye.

† Cartland Crags, near Lanark, celebrated as among the favourite retreats of Sir William Wallace.

IV.

Bertram awaited not the sight
Which sun-rise shows from Barnard's height,
But from the towers, preventing day,
With Wilfrid took his early way,
While misty dawn, and moonbeam pale,
Still mingled in the silent dale.
By Barnard's bridge of stately stone,
The southern bank of Tees they won;
Their winding path then eastward cast,
And Egliston's grey ruins pass'd;*
Each on his own deep visions bent,
Silent and sad they onward went.
Well may you think that Bertram's mood,
To Wilfrid savage seem'd and rude;
Well may you think bold Risingham
Held Wilfrid trivial, poor, and tame;
And small the intercourse, I ween,
Such uncongenial souls between.

V.

Stern Bertram shunn'd the nearer way,
Through Rokeby's park and chase that lay,
And, skirting high the valley's ridge,
They cross'd by Greta's ancient bridge,
Descending where her waters wind
Free for a space and unconfined, [glen,
As, 'scaped from Brignall's dark-wood
She seeks wild Mortham's deeper den.
There, as his eyed glanced o'er the mound,
Raised by that Legion* long renown'd,
Whose votive shrine asserts their claim,
Of pious, faithful, conquering fame,
"Stern sons of war!" sad Wilfrid sigh'd,
"Behold the boast of Roman pride!
What now of all your toils are known?
A grassy trench, a broken stone!"—
This to himself; for moral strain
To Bertram were address'd in vain.

VI.

Of different mood, a deeper sigh
Awoke, when Rokeby's turrets high*
Were northward in the dawning seen
To rear them o'er the thicket green.
O then, though Spenser's self had stray'd
Beside him through the lovely glade,
Lending his rich luxuriant glow
Of fancy, all its charms to show,
Pointing the stream rejoicing free,
As captive set at liberty,
Flashing her sparkling waves abroad,
And clamouring joyful on her road;
Pointing where, up the sunny banks,
The trees retire in scattered ranks,
Save where, advanced before the rest,
On knoll or hillock rears his crest,
Lonely and huge, the giant Oak,
As champions, when their band is broke,
Stand forth to guard the rearward post,
The bulwark of the scatter'd host—
All this, and more, might Spenser say,
Yet waste in vain his magic lay,
While Wilfrid eyed the distant tower,
Whose lattice lights Matilda's bower.

VII.

The open vale is soon pass'd o'er,
Rokeby, though nigh, is seen no more;
Sinking 'mid Greta's thickets deep,
A wild and darker course they keep,
A stern and lone, yet lovely road,
As e'er the foot of Minstrel trode!*
Broad shadows o'er their passage fell,
Deeper and narrower grew the dell;
It seem'd some mountain, rent and riven,
A channel for the stream had given,
So high the cliffs of limestone grey
Hung beetling o'er the torrent's way,
Yielding, along their rugged base,
A flinty footpath's niggard space,
Where he, who winds 'twixt rock and wave,
May hear the headlong torrent rave,
And like a steed in frantic fit,
That flings the froth from curb and bit,
May view her chafe her waves to spray,
O'er every rock that bars her way,
Till foam-globes on her eddies ride,
Thick as the schemes of human pride
That down life's current drive amain,
As frail, as frothy, and as vain!

VIII.

The cliffs that rear their haughty head
High o'er the river's darksome bed,
Were now all naked, wild, and grey,
Now waving all with greenwood spray;
Here trees to every crevice clung,
And o'er the dell their branches hung;
And there, all splinter'd and uneven,
The shiver'd rocks ascend to heaven;
Oft, too, the ivy swath'd their breast,
And wreathed its garland round their crest,
Or from the spires bade loosely flare
Its tendrils in the middle air.
As pennons wont to wave of old
O'er the high feast of Baron bold,
When revell'd loud the feudal rout,
And the arch'd halls return'd their shout;
Such and more wild is Greta's roar,
And such the echoes from her shore.
And so the ivied banners' gleam,
Waved wildly o'er the brawling stream.

IX.

Now from the stream the rocks recede,
But leave between no sunny mead,
No, nor the spot of pebbly sand,
Oft found by such a mountain strand;
Forming such warm and dry retreat,
As fancy deems the lonely seat,
Where hermit, wandering from his cell,
His rosary might love to tell.

But here, 'twixt rock and river, grew
A dismal grove of sable yew,
With whose sad tints were mingled seen
The blighted fir's sepulchral green.
Seem'd that the trees their shadows cast,
The earth that nourish'd them to blast;
For never knew that swarthy grove
The verdant hue that fairies love;
Nor wilding green, nor woodland flower,
Arose within its baleful bower:
The dank and sable earth receives
Its only carpet from the leaves,
That, from the withering branches cast,
Bestrew'd the ground with every blast.
Though now the sun was o'er the hill,
In this dark spot 'twas twilight still,
Save that on Greta's farther side
Some straggling beams through copse-wood glide;
And wild and savage contrast made
That dingle's deep and funeral shade,
With the bright tints of early day,
Which, glimmering through the ivy spray,
On the opposing summit lay.

X.

The lated peasant shunn'd the dell;
For Superstition wont to tell
Of many a grisly sound and sight,
Scaring its path at dead of night. [wide,
When Christmas logs blaze high and
Such wonders speed the festal tide;
While Curiosity and Fear,
Pleasure and Pain, sit crouching near,
Till childhood's cheek no longer glows,
And village maidens lose the rose.
The thrilling interest rises higher,
The circle closes nigh and nigher,
And shuddering glance is cast behind,
As louder moans the wintry wind.
Believe, that fitting scene was laid
For such wild tales in Mortham glade;
For who had seen, on Greta's side,
By that dim light fierce Bertram stride,
In such a spot, at such an hour,
If touch'd by Superstition's power, [given
Might well have deem'd that Hell had
A murderer's ghost to upper Heaven,
While Wilfrid's form had seem'd to glide
Like his pale victim by his side.

XI.

Nor think to village swains alone
Are these unearthly terrors known;
For not to rank nor sex confined
Is this vain ague of the mind:
Hearts firm as steel, as marble hard,
'Gainst faith, and love, and pity barr'd,
Have quaked, like aspen leaves in May,
Beneath its universal sway.
Bertram had listed many a tale
Of wonder in his native dale,
That in his secret soul retain'd
The credence they in childhood gain'd:
Nor less his wild adventurous youth
Believed in every legend's truth;
Learn'd when, beneath the tropic gale,
Full swell'd the vessel's steady sail,
And the broad Indian moon her light
Pour'd on the watch of middle night,
When seamen love to hear and tell
Of portent, prodigy, and spell:
What gales are sold on Lapland's shore,
How whistle rash bids tempests roar,*
Of witch, of mermaid, and of sprite,
Of Erick's cap and Elmo's light;*
Or of that Phantom Ship, whose form
Shoots like a meteor through the storm;
When the dark scud comes driving hard,
And lower'd is every topsail yard,
And canvas, wove in earthly looms,
No more to brave the storm presumes!
Then, 'mid the war of sea and sky,
Top and top-gallant hoisted high,
Full spread and crowded every sail,
The Demon Frigate braves the gale;*
And well the doom'd spectators know
The harbinger of wreck and woe.

XII.

Then, too, were told, in stifled tone,
Marvels and omens all their own;
How, by some desert isle or key,*
Where Spaniards wrought their cruelty,
Or where the savage pirate's mood
Repaid it home in deeds of blood,
Strange nightly sounds of woe and fear
Appall'd the listening Buccanier,
Whose light-arm'd shallop anchor'd lay
In ambush by the lonely bay.
The groan of grief, the shriek of pain,
Ring from the moonlight groves of cane;
The fierce adventurer's heart they scare,
Who wearies memory for a prayer,
Curses the roadstead, and with gale
Of early morning lifts the sail,
To give, in thirst of blood and prey,
A legend for another bay.

XIII.

Thus, as a man, a youth, a child,
Train'd in the mystic and the wild,
With this on Bertram's soul at times
Rush'd a dark feeling of his crimes;
Such to his troubled soul their form,
As the pale Death-ship to the storm,
And such their omen dim and dread,
As shrieks and voices of the dead,—
That pang, whose transitory force
Hover'd 'twixt horror and remorse—
That pang, perchance, his bosom press'd,
As Wilfrid sudden he address'd:—
"Wilfrid, this glen is never trode
Until the sun rides high abroad;

Yet twice have I beheld to-day
A Form, that seem'd to dog our way;
Twice from my glance it seem'd to flee,
And shroud itself by cliff or tree.
How think'st thou?—Is our path waylaid?
Or hath thy sire my trust betray'd?
If so"——Ere, starting from his dream,
That turn'd upon a gentler theme,
Wilfrid had roused him to reply,
Bertram sprung forward, shouting high,
"Whate'er thou art, thou now shalt stand!"—
And forth he darted, sword in hand.

XIV.

As bursts the levin in its wrath,
He shot him down the sounding path;
Rock, wood, and stream rang wildly out,
To his loud step and savage shout.
Seems that the object of his race
Hath scaled the cliffs; his frantic chase
Sidelong he turns, and now 'tis bent
Right up the rock's tall battlement;
Straining each sinew to ascend,
Foot, hand, and knee their aid must lend.
Wilfrid, all dizzy with dismay,
Views, from beneath, his dreadful way:
Now to the oak's warp'd roots he clings,
Now trusts his weight to ivy strings;
Now, like the wild-goat, must he dare
An unsupported leap in air;
Hid in the shrubby rain-course now,
You mark him by the crashing bough,
And by his corslet's sullen clank,
And by the stones spurn'd from the bank,
And by the hawk scared from her nest,
And ravens croaking o'er their guest,
Who deem his forfeit limbs shall pay
The tribute of his bold essay.

XV.

See, he emerges!—desperate now
All farther course—Yon beetling brow,
In craggy nakedness sublime,
What heart or foot shall dare to climb?
It bears no tendril for his clasp,
Presents no angle to his grasp:
Sole stay his foot may rest upon,
Is yon earth-bedded jetting stone.
Balanced on such precarious prop,
He strains his grasp to reach the top.
Just as the dangerous stretch he makes,
By Heaven, his faithless footstool shakes!
Beneath his tottering bulk it bends,
It sways, . . it loosens, . . it descends!
And downward holds its headlong way,
Crashing o'er rock and copsewood spray.
Loud thunders shake the echoing dell!—
Fell it alone?—alone it fell.
Just on the very verge of fate,
The hardy Bertram's falling weight
He trusted to his sinewy hands,
And on the top unharm'd he stands!

XVI.

Wilfrid a safer path pursued;
At intervals where, roughly hew'd,
Rude steps ascending from the dell
Render'd the cliffs accessible.
By circuit slow he thus attain'd
The height that Risingham had gain'd,
And when he issued from the wood,
Before the gate of Mortham stood.*
'Twas a fair scene! the sunbeam lay
On battled tower and portal grey:
And from the grassy slope he sees
The Greta flow to meet the Tees;
Where, issuing from her darksome bed,
She caught the morning's eastern red,
And through the softening vale below
Roll'd her bright waves, in rosy glow,
All blushing to her bridal bed,
Like some shy maid in convent bred;
While linnet, lark, and blackbird gay,
Sing forth her nuptial roundelay.

XVII.

'Twas sweetly sung, that roundelay;
That summer morn shone blithe and gay;
But morning beam, and wild-bird's call,
Awaked not Mortham's silent hall.
No porter, by the low-brow'd gate,
Took in the wonted niche his seat;
To the paved court no peasant drew;
Waked to their toil no menial crew;
The maiden's carol was not heard,
As to her morning task she fared:
In the void offices around,
Rung not a hoof, nor bay'd a hound;
Nor eager steed, with shrilling neigh,
Accused the lagging groom's delay;
Untrimm'd, undress'd, neglected now,
Was alley'd walk and orchard bough;
All spoke the master's absent care,
All spoke neglect and disrepair.
South of the gate, an arrow flight,
Two mighty elms their limbs unite,
As if a canopy, to spread
O'er the lone dwelling of the dead;
For their huge boughs in arches bent
Above a massive monument,
Carved o'er in ancient Gothic wise,
With many a scutcheon and device:
There, spent with toil and sunk in gloom,
Bertram stood pondering by the tomb.

XVIII.

"It vanish'd like a flitting ghost!
Behind this tomb," he said, "'twas lost—
This tomb, where oft I deem'd lies stored
Of Mortham's Indian wealth the hoard.
'Tis true, the aged servants said
Here his lamented wife is laid;

But weightier reasons may be guess'd
For their lord's strict and stern behest,
That none should on his steps intrude,
Whene'er he sought this solitude,—
An ancient mariner I knew,
What time I sail'd with Morgan's crew,
Who oft, 'mid our carousals, spake
Of Raleigh, Frobisher, and Drake;
Adventurous hearts! who barter'd, bold,
Their English steel for Spanish gold.
Trust not, would his experience say,
Captain or comrade with your prey;
But seek some charnel, when, at full,
The moon gilds skeleton and skull:
There dig, and tomb your precious heap,
And bid the dead your treasure keep;*
Sure stewards they, if fitting spell
Their service to the task compel.
Lacks there such charnel?—kill a slave,
Or prisoner, on the treasure-grave;
And bid his discontented ghost
Stalk nightly on his lonely post.—
Such was his tale. Its truth, I ween,
Is in my morning vision seen."

XIX.

Wilfrid, who scorn'd the legend wild,
In mingled mirth and pity smiled,
Much marvelling that a breast so bold
In such fond tale belief should hold;
But yet of Bertram sought to know
The apparition's form and show.—
The power within the guilty breast,
Oft vanquish'd, never quite suppress'd,
That unsubdued and lurking lies
To take the felon by surprise,
And force him, as by magic spell,
In his despite his guilt to tell,—*
That power in Bertram's breast awoke;
Scarce conscious he was heard, he spoke:
"'Twas Mortham's form, from foot to head!
His morion, with the plume of red, [right
His shape, his mien—'twas Mortham,
As when I slew him in the fight."—
"Thou slay him?—thou?"—With conscious start [heart—
He heard, then mann'd his haughty
"I slew him?—I!—I had forgot
Thou, stripling, knew'st not of the plot.
But it is spoken—nor will I
Deed done, or spoken word, deny.
I slew him; I! for thankless pride;
'Twas by this hand that Mortham died!"

XX.

Wilfrid, of gentle hand and heart,
Averse to every active part,
But most averse to martial broil,
From danger shrunk, and turn'd from toil;
Yet the meek lover of the lyre
Nursed one brave spark of noble fire;—
Against injustice, fraud, or wrong,
His blood beat high, his hand wax'd strong.
Not his the nerves that could sustain,
Unshaken, danger, toil, and pain;
But, when that spark blazed forth to flame,
He rose superior to his frame.
And now it came, that generous mood;
And, in full current of his blood,
On Bertram he laid desperate hand,
Placed firm his foot, and drew his brand.
"Should every fiend, to whom thou'rt sold,
Rise in thine aid, I keep my hold.—
Arouse there, ho! take spear and sword!
Attach the murderer of your lord!"

XXI.

A moment, fix'd as by a spell,
Stood Bertram—It seem'd miracle,
That one so feeble, soft, and tame,
Set grasp on warlike Risingham.
But when he felt a feeble stroke,
The fiend within the ruffian woke!
To wrench the sword from Wilfrid's hand,
To dash him headlong on the sand,
Was but one moment's work,—one more
Had drench'd the blade in Wilfrid's gore;
But, in the instant it arose,
To end his life, his love, his woes,
A warlike form, that mark'd the scene,
Presents his rapier sheathed between,
Parries the fast-descending blow,
And steps 'twixt Wilfrid and his foe;
Nor then unscabbarded his brand,
But, sternly pointing with his hand,
With monarch's voice forbade the fight,
And motion'd Bertram from his sight.
"Go, and repent," he said, "while time
Is given thee; add not crime to crime."

XXII.

Mute, and uncertain, and amazed,
As on a vision, Bertram gazed!
'Twas Mortham's bearing, bold and high,
His sinewy frame, his falcon eye,
His look and accent of command,
The martial gesture of his hand,
His stately form, spare-built and tall, [all.
His war-bleach'd locks—'twas Mortham
Through Bertram's dizzy brain career
A thousand thoughts, and all of fear;
His wavering faith received not quite
The form he saw as Mortham's sprite,
But more he fear'd it, if it stood
His lord, in living flesh and blood.—
What spectre can the charnel send,
So dreadful as an injured friend?
Then, too, the habit of command,
Used by the leader of the band,
When Risingham, for many a day,
Had march'd and fought beneath his sway,
Tamed him—and, with reverted face,
Backwards he bore his sullen pace;

Oft stopp'd, and oft on Mortham stared,
And dark as rated mastiff glared;
But when the tramp of steeds was heard,
Plunged in the glen, and disappear'd;—
Nor longer there the Warrior stood,
Retiring eastward through the wood;
But first to Wilfrid warning gives,
"Tell thou to none that Mortham lives."

XXIII.

Still rung these words in Wilfrid's ear,
Hinting he knew not what of fear;
When nearer came the coursers' tread,
And, with his father at their head,
Of horsemen arm'd, a gallant power
Rein'd up their steeds before the tower.
"Whence these pale looks, my son?" he said: [blade?"
"Where's Bertram?—Why that naked
Wilfrid ambiguously replied
(For Mortham's charge his honour tied),
"Bertram is gone—the villain's word
Avouch'd him murderer of his lord!
Even now we fought—but, when your tread
Announced you nigh, the felon fled."
In Wycliffe's conscious eye appear
A guilty hope, a guilty fear;
On his pale brow the dewdrop broke,
And his lip quiver'd as he spoke:—

XXIV.

"A murderer!—Philip Mortham died
Amid the battle's wildest tide.
Wilfrid, or Bertram raves, or you!
Yet, grant such strange confession true,
Pursuit were vain—let him fly far—
Justice must sleep in civil war."
A gallant Youth rode near his side,
Brave Rokeby's page, in battle tried;
That morn, an embassy of weight
He brought to Barnard's castle gate,
And follow'd now in Wycliffe's train,
An answer for his lord to gain.
His steed, whose arch'd and sable neck
An hundred wreaths of foam bedeck,
Chafed not against the curb more high
Than he at Oswald's cold reply;
He bit his lip, implored his saint,
(His the old faith)—then burst restraint.

XXV.

"Yes! I beheld his bloody fall
By that base traitor's dastard ball,
Just when I thought to measure sword,
Presumptuous thought! with Mortham's lord.
And shall the murderer 'scape, who slew
His leader, generous, brave, and true?
Escape, while on the dew you trace
The marks of his gigantic pace?
No! ere the sun that dew shall dry,
False Risingham shall yield or die.—
Ring out the castle 'larum bell!
Arouse the peasants with the knell!
Meantime disperse—ride, gallants, ride!
Beset the wood on every side.
But if among you one there be,
That honour's Mortham's memory,
Let him dismount and follow me!
Else on your crests sit fear and shame,
And foul suspicion dog your name!"

XXVI.

Instant to earth young REDMOND sprung;
Instant on earth the harness rung
Of twenty men of Wycliffe's band,
Who waited not their lord's command.
Redmond his spurs from buskins drew,
His mantle from his shoulders threw,
His pistols in his belt he placed, [traced,
The greenwood gain'd, the footsteps
Shouted like huntsman to his hounds,
"To cover, hark!"—and in he bounds.
Scarce heard was Oswald's anxious cry,
"Suspicion! yes—pursue him—fly—
But venture not, in useless strife,
On ruffian desperate of his life;
Whoever finds him, shoot him dead!
Five hundred nobles for his head!"

XXVII.

The horsemen gallop'd, to make good
Each path that issued from the wood.
Loud from the thickets rung the shout
Of Redmond and his eager rout!
With them was Wilfrid, stung with ire,
And envying Redmond's martial fire,
And emulous of fame.—But where
Is Oswald, noble Mortham's heir?—
He, bound by honour, law, and faith,
Avenger of his kinsman's death?—
Leaning against the elmin tree,
With drooping head and slacken'd knee,
And clenchèd teeth, and close-clasp'd hands,
In agony of soul he stands! [eye on earth is bent,
His downcast
His soul to every sound is lent;
For in each shout that cleaves the air,
May ring discovery and despair.

XXVIII.

What 'vail'd it him, that brightly play'd
The morning sun on Mortham's glade?
All seems in giddy round to ride,
Like objects on a stormy tide,
Seen eddying by the moonlight dim,
Imperfectly to sink and swim.
What 'vail'd it, that the fair domain,
Its battled mansion, hill, and plain,
On which the sun so brightly shone,
Envied so long, was now his own?
The lowest dungeon, in that hour,
Of Brackenbury's dismal tower,
Had been his choice, could such a doom
Have open'd Mortham's bloody tomb!

Forced, too, to turn unwilling ear
To each surmise of hope or fear,
Murmur'd among the rustics round,
Who gather'd at the 'larum sound;
He dared not turn his head away,
E'en to look up to heaven to pray,
Or call on hell, in bitter mood,
For one sharp death-shot from the wood!

XXIX.

At length, o'erpast that dreadful space,
Back straggling came the scatter'd chase;
Jaded and weary, horse and man,
Return'd the troopers, one by one.
Wilfrid, the last, arrived to say,
All trace was lost of Bertram's way,
Though Redmond still, up Brignall wood,
The hopeless quest in vain pursued.—
O, fatal doom of human race!
What tyrant passions passions chase!
Remorse from Oswald's brow is gone—
Avarice and pride resume their throne;
The pang of instant terror by,
They dictate thus their slave's reply:—

XXX.

"Ay—let him range like hasty hound!
And if the grim wolf's lair be found,
Small is my care how goes the game
With Redmond, or with Risingham.—
Nay, answer not, thou simple boy!
Thy fair Matilda, all so coy
To thee, is of another mood
To that bold youth of Erin's blood.
Thy ditties will she freely praise,
And pay thy pains with courtly phrase;
In a rough path will oft command—
Accept at least—thy friendly hand;
His she avoids, or, urged and pray'd,
Unwilling takes his proffer'd aid,
While conscious passion plainly speaks
In downcast look and blushing cheeks.
Whene'er he sings, will she glide nigh,
And all her soul is in her eye;
Yet doubts she still to tender free
The wonted words of courtesy. [sigh,
These are strong signs!—yet wherefore
And wipe, effeminate, thine eye?
Thine shall she be, if thou attend
The counsels of thy sire and friend.

XXXI.

"Scarce wert thou gone, when peep of light
Brought genuine news of Marston's fight.
Brave Cromwell turn'd the doubtful tide,
And conquest bless'd the rightful side;
Three thousand cavaliers lie dead,
Rupert and that bold Marquis fled;
Nobles and knights, so proud of late,
Must fine for freedom and estate.
Of these, committed to my charge,
Is Rokeby, prisoner at large:
Redmond, his page, arrived to say
He reaches Barnard's towers to-day.
Right heavy shall his ransom be,
Unless that maid compound with thee!*
Go to her now—be bold of cheer,
While her soul floats 'twixt hope and fear;
It is the very change of tide,
When best the female heart is tried—
Pride, prejudice, and modesty,
Are in the current swept to sea;
And the bold swain, who plies his oar,
May lightly row his bark to shore."

CANTO THIRD.

I.

THE hunting tribes of air and earth
Respect the brethren of their birth;
Nature, who loves the claim of kind,
Less cruel chase to each assign'd.
The falcon, poised on soaring wing,
Watches the wild-duck by the spring;
The slow-hound wakes the fox's lair;
The greyhound presses on the hare;
The eagle pounces on the lamb;
The wolf devours the fleecy dam:
Even tiger fell, and sullen bear,
Their likeness and their lineage spare;—
Man, only, mars kind Nature's plan,
And turns the fierce pursuit on man;
Plying war's desultory trade,
Incursion, flight, and ambuscade,
Since Nimrod, Cush's mighty son,
At first the bloody game begun.

II.

The Indian, prowling for his prey.
Who hears the settlers track his way,
And knows in distant forest far
Camp his red brethren of the war—
He, when each double and disguise
To baffle the pursuit he tries,
Low crouching now his head to hide,
Where swampy streams thro' rushes glide,
Now covering with the wither'd leaves
The foot-prints that the dew receives—
He, skill'd in every sylvan guile,
Knows not, nor tries, such various wile,
As Risingham, when on the wind
Arose the loud pursuit behind.
In Redesdale his youth had heard
Each art her wily dalesmen dared,
When Rooken-edge, and Redswair high,
To bugle rung and blood-hound's cry,*
Announcing Jedwood-axe and spear,
And Lid'sdale riders in the rear;
And well his venturous life had proved
The lessons that his childhood loved.

III.

Oft had he shown, in climes afar,
Each attribute of roving war;

The sharpen'd ear, the piercing eye,
The quick resolve in danger nigh;
The speed, that in the flight or chase,
Outstripp'd the Charib's rapid race;
The steady brain, the sinewy limb,
To leap, to climb, to dive, to swim;
The iron frame, inured to bear
Each dire inclemency of air;
Nor less confirm'd to undergo
Fatigue's faint chill and famine's throe.
These arts he proved, his life to save,
In peril oft by land and wave,
On Arawaca's desert shore,
Or where La Plata's billows roar,
When oft the sons of vengeful Spain
Track'd the marauder's steps in vain;—
These arts, in Indian warfare tried,
Must save him now by Greta's side.

IV.

'Twas then, in hour of utmost need,
He proved his courage, art, and speed.
Now slow he stalk'd with stealthy pace,
Now started forth in rapid race,
Oft doubling back in mazy train,
To blind the trace the dews retain;
Now clombe the rocks projecting high,
To baffle the pursuer's eye; [sound
Now sought the stream, whose brawling
The echo of his footsteps drown'd.
But if the forest verge he nears,
There trample steeds, and glimmer spears;
If deeper down the copse he drew,
He heard the rangers' loud halloo,
Beating each cover while they came,
As if to start the sylvan game.
'Twas then—like tiger close beset
At every pass with toil and net,
'Counter'd, where'er he turns his glare,
By clashing arms and torches' flare,
Who meditates, with furious bound,
To burst on hunter, horse, and hound,—
'Twas then that Bertram's soul arose,
Prompting to rush upon his foes:
But as that crouching tiger, cow'd
By brandish'd steel and shouting crowd,
Retreats beneath the jungle's shroud,
Bertram suspends his purpose stern,
And couches in the brake and fern,
Hiding his face, lest foemen spy,
The sparkle of his swarthy eye.*

V.

Then Bertram might the bearing trace
Of the bold youth who led the chase;
Who paused to list for every sound,
Climb every height to look around,
Then, rushing on with naked sword,
Each dingle's bosky depths explored.
'Twas Redmond—by the azure eye;
'Twas Redmond—by the locks that fly
Disorder'd from his glowing cheek;
Mien, face, and form, young Redmond speak.
A form more active, light, and strong,
Ne'er shot the ranks of war along;
The modest, yet the manly mien,
Might grace the court of maiden queen;
A face more fair you well might find,
For Redmond's knew the sun and wind,
Nor boasted, from their tinge when free,
The charm of regularity;
But every feature had the power
To aid the expression of the hour:
Whether gay wit, and humour sly,
Danced laughing in his light-blue eye;
Or bended brow, and glance of fire,
And kindling cheek, spoke Erin's ire;
Or soft and sadden'd glances show
Her ready sympathy with woe;
Or in that wayward mood of mind,
When various feelings are combined,
When joy and sorrow mingle near, [fear,
And hope's bright wings are check'd by
And rising doubts keep transport down,
And anger lends a short-lived frown;
In that strange mood which maids approve,
Even when they dare not call it love;
With every change his features play'd,
As aspens show the light and shade.

VI.

Well Risingham young Redmond knew:
And much he marvell'd that the crew,
Roused to revenge bold Mortham dead,
Were by that Mortham's foeman led;
For never felt his soul the woe,
That wails a generous foeman low,
Far less that sense of justice strong,
That wreaks a generous foeman's wrong.
But small his leisure now to pause;
Redmond is first, whate'er the cause:
And twice that Redmond came so near
Where Bertram couch'd like hunted deer,
The very boughs his steps displace,
Rustled against the ruffian's face,
Who, desperate, twice prepared to start,
And plunge his dagger in his heart!
But Redmond turn'd a different way,
And the bent boughs resumed their sway,
And Bertram held it wise, unseen,
Deeper to plunge in coppice green.
Thus, circled in his coil, the snake,
When roving hunters beat the brake,
Watches with red and glistening eye,
Prepared, if heedless step draw nigh,
With forkèd tongue and venom'd fang
Instant to dart the deadly pang;
But if the intruders turn aside,
Away his coils unfolded glide,
And through the wild savannah wind,
Some undisturb'd retreat to find.

VII.

But Bertram, as he backward drew,
And heard the loud pursuit renew,
And Redmond's hollo on the wind,
Oft mutter'd in his savage mind—
"Redmond O'Neale! were thou and I
Alone this day's event to try,
With not a second here to see,
But the grey cliff and oaken tree,—
That voice of thine, that shouts so loud,
Should ne'er repeat its summons proud!
No! nor e'er try its melting power
Again in maiden's summer bower."
Eluded, now behind him die,
Faint and more faint, each hostile cry;
He stands in Scargill wood alone,
Nor hears he now a harsher tone
Than the hoarse cushat's plaintive cry,
Or Greta's sound that murmurs by;
And on the dale, so lone and wild,
The summer sun in quiet smiled.

VIII.

He listen'd long with anxious heart,
Ear bent to hear, and foot to start,
And, while his stretch'd attention glows,
Refused his weary frame repose.
'Twas silence all—he laid him down,
Where purple heath profusely strown,
And throatwort, with its azure bell,
And moss and thyme his cushion swell.
There, spent with toil, he listless eyed
The course of Greta's playful tide;
Beneath, her banks now eddying dun,
Now brightly gleaming to the sun,
As, dancing over rock and stone,
In yellow light her currents shone,
Matching in hue the favourite gem
Of Albin's mountain-diadem.
Then, tired to watch the currents play,
He turn'd his weary eyes away,
To where the bank opposing show'd
Its huge, square cliffs through shaggy wood.
One, prominent above the rest,
Rear'd to the sun its pale grey breast;
Around its broken summit grew
The hazel rude, and sable yew;
A thousand varied lichens dyed
Its waste and weather-beaten side;
And round its rugged basis lay,
By time or thunder rent away,
Fragments, that, from its frontlet torn,
Were mantled now by verdant thorn.
Such was the scene's wild majesty,
That fill'd stern Bertram's gazing eye.

IX.

In sullen mood he lay reclined,
Revolving, in his stormy mind,
The felon deed, the fruitless guilt,
His patron's blood by treason spilt;
A crime, it seem'd, so dire and dread,
That it had power to wake the dead.
Then, pondering on his life betray'd
By Oswald's art to Redmond's blade,
In treacherous purpose to withhold,
So seem'd it, Mortham's promised gold,
A deep and full revenge he vow'd
On Redmond, forward, fierce, and proud;
Revenge on Wilfrid—on his sire
Redoubled vengeance, swift and dire!—
If, in such mood (as legends say,
And well believed that simple day),
The Enemy of Man has power
To profit by the evil hour,
Here stood a wretch, prepared to change
His soul's redemption for revenge!
But though his vows, with such a fire
Of earnest and intense desire
For vengeance dark and fell, were made,
As well might reach hell's lowest shade,
No deeper clouds the grove embrown'd,
No nether thunders shook the ground;—
The demon knew his vassal's heart,
And spared temptation's needless art.

X.

Oft, mingled with the direful theme,
Came Mortham's form—Was it a dream?
Or had he seen, in vision true,
That very Mortham whom he slew?
Or had in living flesh appear'd
The only man on earth he fear'd?—
To try the mystic cause intent,
His eyes, that on the cliff were bent,
'Counter'd at once a dazzling glance,
Like sunbeam flash'd from sword or lance.
At once he started as for fight,
But not a foeman was in sight;
He heard the cushat's murmur hoarse,
He heard the river's sounding course;
The solitary woodlands lay,
As slumbering in the summer ray.
He gazed, like lion roused, around,
Then sunk again upon the ground.
'Twas but, he thought, some fitful beam,
Glance sudden from the sparkling stream;
Then plunged him from his gloomy train
Of ill-connected thoughts again,
Until a voice behind him cried,
"Bertram! well met on Greta side."

XI.

Instant his sword was in his hand,
As instant sunk the ready brand;
Yet, dubious still, opposed he stood
To him that issued from the wood:
"Guy Denzil!—is it thou?" he said;
"Do we two meet in Scargill shade!—
Stand back a space!—thy purpose show,
Whether thou com'st as friend or foe.

Report hath said, that Denzil's name
From Rokeby's band was razed with shame."—
"A shame I owe that hot O'Neale,
Who told his knight, in peevish zeal,
Of my marauding on the clowns
Of Calverley and Bradford downs.*
I reck not. In a war to strive,
Where, save the leaders, none can thrive,
Suits ill my mood; and better game
Awaits us both, if thou'rt the same
Unscrupulous, bold Risingham,
Who watch'd with me in midnight dark,
To snatch a deer from Rokeby-park.
How think'st thou?"—"Speak thy purpose out;
I love not mystery or doubt."—

XII.

"Then list.—Not far there lurk a crew
Of trusty comrades, staunch and true,
Glean'd from both factions—Roundheads, freed
From cant of sermon and of creed;
And cavaliers, whose souls, like mine,
Spurn at the bonds of discipline.
Wiser, we judge, by dale and wold,
A warfare of our own to hold,
Than breathe our last on battle-down,
For cloak or surplice, mace or crown.
Our schemes are laid, our purpose set,
A chief and leader lack we yet.—
Thou art a wanderer, it is said;
For Mortham's death, thy steps waylaid,
Thy head at price—so say our spies,
Who range the valley in disguise.
Join then with us:—though wild debate
And wrangling rend our infant state,
Each to an equal loth to bow,
Will yield to chief renown'd as thou."—

XIII.

"Even now," thought Bertram, passion stirr'd,
"I call'd on hell, and hell has heard!
What lack I, vengeance to command,
But of staunch comrades such a band?
This Denzil, vow'd to every evil,
Might read a lesson to the devil.
Well, be it so! each knave and fool
Shall serve as my revenge's tool."—
Aloud, "I take thy proffer, Guy,
But tell me where thy comrades lie?"—
"Not far from hence," Guy Denzil said;
"Descend, and cross the river's bed,
Where rises yonder cliff so grey."—
"Do thou," said Bertram, "lead the way."
Then mutter'd, "It is best make sure;
Guy Denzil's faith was never pure."
He follow'd down the steep descent,
Then through the Greta's streams they went;
And, when they reach'd the farther shore,
They stood the lonely cliff before.

XIV.

With wonder Bertram heard within
The flinty rock a murmur'd din;
But when Guy pull'd the wilding spray,
And brambles, from its base away,
He saw, appearing to the air,
A little entrance, low and square,
Like opening cell of hermit lone,
Dark, winding through the living stone.
Here enter'd Denzil, Bertram here;
And loud and louder on their ear,
As from the bowels of the earth,
Resounded shouts of boisterous mirth.
Of old, the cavern strait and rude,
In slaty rock the peasant hew'd;
And Brignall's woods, and Scargill's, wave,
E'en now, o'er many a sister cave,*
Where, far within the darksome rift,
The wedge and lever ply their thrift.
But war had silenced rural trade,
And the deserted mine was made
The banquet-hall, and fortress too,
Of Denzil and his desperate crew.—
There Guilt his anxious revel kept;
There, on his sordid pallet, slept
Guilt-born Excess,—the goblet drain'd,
Still in his slumbering grasp retain'd;
Regret was there, his eye still cast
With vain repining on the past;
Among the feasters waited near
Sorrow, and unrepentant Fear,
And Blasphemy, to frenzy driven,
With his own crimes reproaching heaven;
While Bertram show'd, amid the crew,
The Master-Fiend that Milton drew.

XV.

Hark! the loud revel wakes again,
To greet the leader of the train.
Behold the group by the pale lamp,
That struggles with the earthy damp.
By what strange features Vice hath known,
To single out and mark her own!
Yet some there are, whose brows retain
Less deeply stamp'd her brand and stain.
See yon pale stripling! when a boy,
A mother's pride, a father's joy!
Now, 'gainst the vault's rude walls reclined,
An early image fills his mind:
The cottage, once his sire's, he sees
Embower'd upon the banks of Tees;
He views sweet Winston's woodland scene,
And shares the dance on Gainford-green.
A tear is springing—but the zest
Of some wild tale, or brutal jest,
Hath to loud laughter stirr'd the rest.
On him they call, the aptest mate
For jovial song and merry feat:

Fast flies his dream—with dauntless air,
As one victorious o'er Despair,
He bids the ruddy cup go round,
Till sense and sorrow both are drown'd;
And soon, in merry wassail, he,
The life of all their revelry,
Peals his loud song!—The muse has found
Her blossoms on the wildest ground,
'Mid noxious weeds at random strew'd,
Themselves all profitless and rude.—
With desperate merriment he sung,
The cavern to the chorus rung;
Yet mingled with his reckless glee
Remorse's bitter agony.

XVI.

SONG.

O, Brignall banks are wild and fair,
And Greta woods are green,
And you may gather garlands there,
Would grace a summer queen.
And as I rode by Dalton-hall,
Beneath the turrets high,
A Maiden on the castle wall
Was singing merrily,—

CHORUS.

"O, Brignall banks are fresh and fair
And Greta woods are green;
I'd rather rove with Edmund there,
Than reign our English queen."—

"If, Maiden, thou wouldst wend with me,
To leave both tower and town,
Thou first must guess what life lead we,
That dwell by dale and down?
And if thou canst that riddle read,
As read full well you may,
Then to the greenwood shalt thou speed,
As blithe as Queen of May."—

CHORUS.

Yet sung she, "Brignall banks are fair,
And Greta woods are green;
I'd rather rove with Edmund there,
Than reign our English queen.

XVII.

"I read you, by your bugle-horn,
And by your palfrey good,
I read you for a ranger sworn,
To keep the the king's greenwood."—
"A Ranger, lady, winds his horn,
And 'tis at peep of light;
His blast is heard at merry morn,
And mine at dead of night."

CHORUS.

Yet sung she, "Brignall banks are fair,
And Greta woods are gay;
I would I were with Edmund there,
To reign his Queen of May!

"With burnish'd brand and musketoon,
So gallantly you come,
I read you for a bold Dragoon,
That lists the tuck of drum."—
"I list no more the tuck of drum,
No more the trumpet hear;
But when the beetle sounds his hum,
My comrades take the spear.

CHORUS.

"And, O! though Brignall banks be fair,
And Greta woods be gay,
Yet mickle must the maiden dare,
Would reign my Queen of May!

XVIII.

"Maiden! a nameless life I lead,
A nameless death I'll die!
The fiend, whose lantern lights the mead,
Were better mate than I!
And when I'm with my comrades met,
Beneath the greenwood bough,
What once we were we all forget,
Nor think what we are now.

CHORUS.

"Yet Brignall banks are fresh and fair,
And Greta woods are green,
And you may gather garlands there
Would grace a summer queen."

When Edmund ceased his simple song,
Was silence on the sullen throng,
Till waked some ruder mate their glee
With note of coarser minstrelsy.
But, far apart, in dark divan,
Denzil and Bertram many a plan,
Of import foul and fierce, design'd,
While still on Bertram's grasping mind
The wealth of murder'd Mortham hung;
Though half he fear'd his daring tongue,
When it should give his wishes birth,
Might raise a spectre from the earth!

XIX.

At length his wondrous tale he told:
When, scornful, smiled his comrade bold;
For, train'd in license of a court,
Religion's self was Denzil's sport;
Then judge in what contempt he held
The visionary tales of eld!
His awe for Bertram scarce repress'd
The unbeliever's sneering jest.
"'Twere hard," he said, "for sage or seer,
To spell the subject of your fear;
Nor do I boast the art renown'd,
Vision and omen to expound.
Yet, faith if I must needs afford
To spectre watching treasured board,
As ban-dog keeps his master's roof,
Bidding the plunderer stand aloof,
This doubt remains—thy goblin gaunt
Hath chosen ill his ghostly haunt;
For why his guard on Mortham hold,
When Rokeby castle hath the gold

Thy patron won on Indian soil,
By stealth, by piracy, and spoil?"—

XX.

At this he paused—for angry shame
Lower'd on the brow of Risingham.
He blush'd to think, that he should seem
Assertor of an airy dream,
And gave his wrath another theme.
"Denzil," he says, "though lowly laid,
Wrong not the memory of the dead;
For, while he lived, at Mortham's look
Thy very soul, Guy Denzil, shook!
And when he tax'd thy breach of word
To yon fair Rose of Allenford,
I saw thee crouch like chasten'd hound,
Whose back the huntsman's lash hath found.
Nor dare to call his foreign wealth
The spoil of piracy or stealth;
He won it bravely with his brand,
When Spain waged warfare with our land.*
Mark, too—I brook no idle jeer,
Nor couple Bertram's name with fear;
Mine is but half the demon's lot,
For I believe, but tremble not.—
Enough of this.—Say, why this hoard
Thou deem'st at Rokeby castle stored;
Or think'st that Mortham would bestow
His treasure with his faction's foe?"

XXI.

Soon quench'd was Denzil's ill-timed mirth;
Rather he would have seen the earth
Give to ten thousand spectres birth,
Than venture to awake to flame
The deadly wrath of Risingham.
Submiss he answer'd,—"Mortham's mind,
Thou know'st, to joy was ill inclined.
In youth, 'tis said, a gallant free,
A lusty reveller was he;
But since return'd from over sea,
A sullen and a silent mood
Hath numb'd the current of his blood.
Hence he refused each kindly call
To Rokeby's hospitable hall;
And our stout knight, at dawn of morn
Who loved to hear the bugle-horn,
Nor less, when eve his oaks embrown'd,
To see the ruddy cup go round,
Took umbrage that a friend so near
Refused to share his chase and cheer;
Thus did the kindred barons jar,
Ere they divided in the war.
Yet, trust me, friend, Matilda fair
Of Mortham's wealth is destined heir."—

XXII.

"Destined to her! to yon slight maid!
The prize my life had wellnigh paid,
When 'gainst Laroche, by Cayo's wave,
I fought, my patron's wealth to save!—
Denzil, I knew him long, yet ne'er
Knew him that joyous cavalier,
Whom youthful friends and early fame
Call'd soul of gallantry and game.
A moody man, he sought our crew,
Desperate and dark, whom no one knew;
And rose, as men with us must rise,
By scorning life and all its ties.
On each adventure rash he roved,
As danger for itself he loved;
On his sad brow nor mirth nor wine
Could e'er one wrinkled knot untwine;
Ill was the omen if he smiled,
For 'twas in peril stern and wild;
But when he laugh'd, each luckless mate
Might hold our fortune desperate.
Foremost he fought in every broil,
Then scornful turn'd him from the spoil;
Nay, often strove to bar the way
Between his comrades and their prey;
Preaching, even then, to such as we,
Hot with our dear-bought victory,
Of mercy and humanity.

XXIII.

"I loved him well—His fearless part,
His gallant leading, won my heart.
And after each victorious fight,
'Twas I that wrangled for his right,
Redeem'd his portion of the prey
That greedier mates had torn away;
In field and storm thrice saved his life,
And once amid our comrades' strife.—*
Yes, I have loved thee! Well hath proved
My toil, my danger, how I loved!
Yet will I mourn no more thy fate,
Ingrate in life, in death ingrate.
Rise if thou canst!" he look'd around,
And sternly stamp'd upon the ground—
"Rise, with thy bearing proud and high,
Even as this morn it met mine eye,
And give me, if thou dar'st, the lie!"
He paused—then, calm and passion-freed,
Bade Denzil with his tale proceed.

XXIV.

"Bertram, to thee I need not tell,
What thou hast cause to wot so well,
How Superstition's nets were twined
Around the Lord of Mortham's mind!
But since he drove thee from his tower,
A maid he found in Greta's bower,
Whose speech, like David's harp, had sway,
To charm his evil fiend away.
I know not if her features moved
Remembrance of the wife he loved;
But he would gaze upon her eye,
Till his mood soften'd to a sigh.
He, whom no living mortal sought
To question of his secret thought,
Now every thought and care confess'd
To his fair niece's faithful breast;

Nor was there aught of rich and rare,
In earth, in ocean, or in air,
But it must deck Matilda's hair.
Her love still bound him unto life;
But then awoke the civil strife,
And menials bore, by his commands,
Three coffers, with their iron bands,
From Mortham's vault, at midnight deep,
To her lone bower in Rokeby-keep,
Ponderous with gold and plate of pride,
His gift, if he in battle died."—

XXV.

"Then Denzil, as I guess, lays train,
These iron-banded chests to gain;
Else, wherefore should he hover here,
Where many a peril waits him near,
For all his feats of war and peace,
For plunder'd boors, and harts of greese?
Since through the hamlets as he fared,
What hearth has Guy's marauding spared,
Or where the chase that hath not rung
With Denzil's bow, at midnight strung?"—
"I hold my wont—my rangers go,
Even now to track a milk-white doe.
By Rokeby-hall she takes her lair,
In Greta wood she harbours fair,
And when my huntsman marks her way,
What think'st thou, Bertram, of the prey?
Were Rokeby's daughter in our power,
We rate her ransom at her dower."

XXVI.

"'Tis well!—there's vengeance in the
Matilda is by Wilfrid sought; [thought,
And hot-brain'd Redmond, too, 'tis said,
Pays lover's homage to the maid.
Bertram she scorned—If met by chance,
She turned from me her shuddering glance,
Like a nice dame, that will not brook
On what she hates and loathes to look;
She told to Mortham she could ne'er
Behold me without secret fear,
Foreboding evil:—She may rue
To find her prophecy fall true!—
The war has weeded Rokeby's train,
Few followers in his halls remain;
If thy scheme miss, then, brief and bold,
We are enow to storm the hold;
Bear off the plunder, and the dame,
And leave the castle all in flame."—

XXVII.

"Still art thou Valour's venturous son!
Yet ponder first the risk to run:
The menials of the castle, true,
And stubborn to their charge, though few;
The wall to scale—the moat to cross—
The wicket-grate—the inner fosse."——
——"Fool! if we blench for toys like these,
On what fair guerdon can we seize?
Our hardiest venture, to explore
Some wretched peasant's fenceless door,
And the best prize we bear away,
The earnings of his sordid day."—
"A while thy hasty taunt forbear:
In sight of road more sure and fair,
Thou wouldst not choose, in blindfold
Or wantonness, a desperate path? [wrath,
List, then;—for vantage or assault,
From gilded vane to dungeon-vault,
Each pass of Rokeby-house I know:
There is one postern, dark and low,
That issues at a secret spot,
By most neglected or forgot.
Now, could a spial of our train
On fair pretext admittance gain,
That sally-port might be unbarr'd:
Then, vain were battlement and ward!"—

XXVIII.

"Now speak'st thou well:—to me the
If force or art shall urge the game; [same,
Indifferent, if like fox I wind,
Or spring like tiger on the hind.—
But, hark! our merry men so gay
Troll forth another roundelay."—

SONG.

"A weary lot is thine, fair maid,
A weary lot is thine!
To pull the thorn thy brow to braid,
And press the rue for wine!
A lightsome eye, a soldier's mien,
A feather of the blue,
A doublet of the Lincoln green,—
No more of me you knew,
My love!
No more of me you knew.

"This morn is merry June, I trow,
The rose is budding fain;
But she shall bloom in winter snow,
Ere we two meet again."
He turn'd his charger as he spake,
Upon the river shore,
He gave his bridle-reins a shake,
Said, "Adieu for evermore,
My love!
And adieu for evermore."—*

XXIX.

"What youth is this, your band among,
The best for minstrelsy and song?
In his wild notes seem aptly met
A strain of pleasure and regret."—
"Edmund of Winston is his name;
The hamlet sounded with the fame
Of early hopes his childhood gave,—
Now center'd all in Brignall cave!
I watch him well—his wayward course
Shows oft a tincture of remorse.
Some early love-shaft grazed his heart,
And oft the scar will ache and smart.
Yet is he useful;—of the rest,
By fits, the darling and the jest,

His harp, his story, and his lay,
Oft aid the idle hours away:
When unemploy'd, each fiery mate
Is ripe for mutinous debate.
He tuned his strings e'en now—again
He wakes them, with a blither strain."

XXX.

SONG.

Allen-a-Dale.

Allen-a-Dale has no faggot for burning,
Allen-a-Dale has no furrow for turning,
Allen-a-Dale has no fleece for the spinning,
Yet Allen-a-Dale has red gold for the winning. [my tale!
Come, read me my riddle! come, hearken
And tell me the craft of bold Allen-a-Dale.

The Baron of Ravensworth prances in pride, [side,
And he views his domains upon Arkindale
The mere for his net, and the land for his game, [the tame;
The chase for the wild, and the park for
Yet the fish of the lake, and the deer of the vale, [Dale!
Are less free to Lord Dacre than Allen-a-

Allen-a-Dale was ne'er belted a knight,
Though his spur be as sharp, and his blade be as bright;
Allen-a-Dale is no baron or lord,
Yet twenty tall yeomen will draw at his word; [vail,
And the best of our nobles his bonnet will
Who at Rere-cross* on Stanmore meets Allen-a-Dale.

Allen-a-Dale to his wooing is come;
The mother, she ask'd of his household and home: [fair on the hill,
"Though the castle of Richmond stand
My hall," quoth bold Allen, "shows gallanter still; [crescent so pale,
'Tis the blue vault of heaven, with its
And with all its bright spangles!" said Allen-a-Dale.

The father was steel, and the mother was stone; [be gone;
They lifted the latch, and they bade him
But loud, on the morrow, their wail and their cry: [black eye,
He had laugh'd on the lass with his bonny
And she fled to the forest to hear a love-tale, [a-Dale!
And the youth it was told by was Allen-

XXXI.

"Thou see'st that, whether sad or gay,
Love mingles ever in his lay.
But when his boyish wayward fit
Is o'er, he hath address and wit;
O! 'tis a brain of fire, can ape
Each dialect, each various shape."
"Nay, then, to aid thy project, Guy—
Soft! who comes here?"—"My trusty spy.
Speak, Hamlin! hast thou lodged our deer?"—*
"I have—but two fair stags are near.
I watch'd her, as she slowly stray'd
From Egliston up Thorsgill glade;
But Wilfrid Wycliffe sought her side,
And then young Redmond, in his pride,
Shot down to meet them on their way:
Much, as it seem'd, was theirs to say:
There 's time to pitch both toil and net,
Before their path be homeward set."
A hurried and a whisper'd speech
Did Bertram's will to Denzil teach;
Who, turning to the robber band,
Bade four, the bravest, take the brand.

CANTO FOURTH.

I.

When Denmark's raven soar'd on high,
Triumphant through Northumbrian sky,
Till, hovering near, her fatal croak
Bade Reged's Britons dread the yoke,*
And the broad shadow of her wing
Blacken'd each cataract and spring,
Where Tees in tumult leaves his source,
Thundering o'er Caldron and High-Force;
Beneath the shade the Northmen came,
Fix'd on each vale a Runic name,*
Rear'd high their altar's rugged stone,
And gave their Gods the land they won.
Then, Balder, one bleak garth was thine,
And one sweet brooklet's silver line,
And Woden's Croft did title gain
From the stern Father of the Slain;
But to the Monarch of the Mace,
That held in fight the foremost place,
To Odin's son, and Sifia's spouse,
Near Stratforth high they paid their vows,
Remember'd Thor's victorious fame,
And gave the dell the Thunderer's name.

II.

Yet Scald or Kemper err'd, I ween,
Who gave that soft and quiet scene,
With all its varied light and shade,
And every little sunny glade,
And the blithe brook that strolls along
Its pebbled bed with summer song,
To the grim God of blood and scar,
The grisly King of Northern War.
O, better were its banks assign'd
To spirits of a gentler kind!
For where the thicket groups recede,
And the rath primrose decks the mead,
The velvet grass seems carpet meet
For the light fairies' lively feet.

Yon tufted knoll, with daisies strown,
Might make proud Oberon a throne,
While, hidden in the thicket nigh,
Puck should brood o'er his frolic sly;
And where profuse the wood-vetch clings
Round ash and elm, in verdant rings,
Its pale and azure-pencill'd flower
Should canopy Titania's bower.

III.

Here rise no cliffs the vale to shade;
But, skirting every sunny glade,
In fair variety of green
The woodland lends its sylvan screen.
Hoary, yet haughty, frowns the oak,
Its boughs by weight of ages broke;
And towers erect, in sable spire,
The pine-tree scathed by lightning-fire;
The drooping ash and birch, between,
Hang their fair tresses o'er the green,
And all beneath, at random grow
Each coppice dwarf of varied show,
Or, round the stems profusely twined,
Fling summer odours on the wind.
Such varied group Urbino's hand
Round Him of Tarsus nobly plann'd,
What time he bade proud Athens own
On Mars's Mount the God Unknown!
Then grey Philosophy stood nigh,
Though bent by age, in spirit high:
There rose the scar-seam'd veteran's spear,
There Grecian Beauty bent to hear,
While Childhood at her foot was placed,
Or clung delighted to her waist.

IV.

"And rest we here," Matilda said,
And sat her in the varying shade.
"Chance-met, we well may steal an hour,
To friendship due, from fortune's power.
Thou, Wilfrid, ever kind, must lend
Thy counsel to thy sister-friend;
And, Redmond, thou, at my behest,
No farther urge thy desperate 'quest.
For to my care a charge is left,
Dangerous to one of aid bereft;
Wellnigh an orphan, and alone,
Captive her sire, her house o'erthrown."
Wilfrid, with wonted kindness graced,
Beside her on the turf she placed;
Then paused, with downcast look and eye,
Nor bade young Redmond seat him nigh.
Her conscious diffidence he saw,
Drew backward, as in modest awe,
And sat a little space removed,
Unmark'd to gaze on her he loved.

V.

Wreathed in its dark-brown rings, her hair
Half hid Matilda's forehead fair,
Half hid and half reveal'd to view
Her full dark eye of hazel hue.

The rose, with faint and feeble streak,
So slightly tinged the maiden's cheek,
That you had said her hue was pale;
But if she faced the summer gale,
Or spoke, or sung, or quicker moved,
Or heard the praise of those she loved,
Or when of interest was express'd
Aught that waked feeling in her breast,
The mantling blood in ready play
Rivall'd the blush of rising day.
There was a soft and pensive grace,
A cast of thought upon her face,
That suited well the forehead high,
The eyelash dark, and downcast eye;
The mild expression spoke a mind
In duty firm, composed, resign'd;—
'Tis that which Roman art has given,
To mark their maiden Queen of Heaven.
In hours of sport, that mood gave way
To fancy's light and frolic play;
And when the dance, or tale, or song,
In harmless mirth sped time along,
Full oft her doting sire would call
His Maud the merriest of them all.
But days of war and civil crime
Allow'd but ill such festal time,
And her soft pensiveness of brow
Had deepen'd into sadness now.
In Marston field her father ta'en, [slain,
Her friends dispersed, brave Mortham
While every ill her soul foretold,
From Oswald's thirst of power and gold,
And boding thoughts that she must part
With a soft vision of her heart,—
All lower'd around the lovely maid,
To darken her dejection's shade.

VI.

Who has not heard—while Erin yet
Strove 'gainst the Saxon's iron bit—
Who has not heard how brave O'Neale
In English blood imbrued his steel,*
Against Saint George's cross blazed high
The banners of his Tanistry,
To fiery Essex gave the foil,
And reign'd a prince on Ulster's soil?
But chief arose his victor pride, [died,*
When that brave Marshal fought and
And Avon-Duff to ocean bore
His billows red with Saxon gore.
'Twas first in that disastrous fight,
Rokeby and Mortham proved their might.
There had they fall'n amongst the rest,
But pity touch'd a chieftain's breast;—
The Tanist he to great O'Neale;*
He check'd his followers' bloody zeal,
To quarter took the kinsmen bold,
And bore them to his mountain-hold,
Gave them each sylvan joy to know,
Slieve-Donard's cliffs and woods could
show;

Shared with them Erin's festal cheer,
Show'd them the chase of wolf and deer,
And, when a fitting time was come,
Safe and unransom'd sent them home,
Loaded with many a gift, to prove
A generous foe's respect and love.

VII.

Years speed away. On Rokeby's head
Some touch of early snow was shed;
Calm he enjoy'd, by Greta's wave,
The peace which James the Peaceful gave,
While Mortham, far beyond the main,
Waged his fierce wars on Indian Spain.—
It chanced upon a wintry night,
That whiten'd Stanmore's stormy height,
The chase was o'er, the stag was kill'd,
In Rokeby-hall the cups were fill'd,
And by the huge stone chimney sate
The Knight in hospitable state.
Moonless the sky, the hour was late,
When a loud summons shook the gate,
And sore for entrance and for aid
A voice of foreign accent pray'd.
The porter answer'd to the call,
And instant rush'd into the hall
A Man, whose aspect and attire
Startled the circle by the fire.

VIII.

His plaited hair in elf-locks spread
Around his bare and matted head;
On leg and thigh, close stretch'd and trim,
His vesture show'd the sinewy limb;
In saffron dyed, a linen vest
Was frequent folded round his breast;
A mantle long and loose he wore,
Shaggy with ice, and stain'd with gore.
He clasp'd a burden to his heart,
And, resting on a knotted dart,
The snow from hair and beard he shook,
And round him gazed with wilder'd look.
Then up the hall, with staggering pace,
He hasten'd by the blaze to place,
Half lifeless from the bitter air,
His load, a Boy of beauty rare.
To Rokeby, next, he louted low,
Then stood erect his tale to show,
With wild majestic port and tone,
Like envoy of some barbarous throne.*
"Sir Richard, Lord of Rokeby, hear!
Turlough O'Neale salutes thee dear;
He graces thee, and to thy care
Young Redmond gives, his grandson fair.
He bids thee breed him as thy son,
For Turlough's days of joy are done;
And other lords have seized his land,
And faint and feeble is his hand;
And all the glory of Tyrone
Is like a morning vapour flown.
To bind the duty on thy soul,
He bids thee think on Erin's bowl!
If any wrong the young O'Neale,
He bids thee think of Erin's steel.
To Mortham first this charge was due,
But, in his absence, honours you.—
Now is my master's message by,
And Ferraught will contented die.

IX.

His look grew fix'd, his cheek grew pale,
He sunk when he had told his tale;
For, hid beneath his mantle wide,
A mortal wound was in his side.
Vain was all aid—in terror wild,
And sorrow, scream'd the orphan Child.
Poor Ferraught raised his wistful eyes,
And faintly strove to soothe his cries;
All reckless of his dying pain,
He blest, and blest him o'er again!
And kiss'd the little hands outspread,
And kiss'd and cross'd the infant head,
And, in his native tongue and phrase,
Pray'd to each Saint to watch his days;
Then all his strength together drew,
The charge to Rokeby to renew.
When half was falter'd from his breast,
And half by dying signs express'd,
"Bless thee, O'Neale!" he faintly said,
And thus the faithful spirit fled.

X.

'Twas long ere soothing might prevail
Upon the Child to end the tale;
And then he said, that from his home
His grandsire had been forced to roam,
Which had not been if Redmond's hand
Had but had strength to draw the brand,
The brand of Lenaugh More the Red,
That hung beside the grey wolf's head.—
'Twas from his broken phrase descried,
His foster-father was his guide,
Who, in his charge, from Ulster bore
Letters, and gifts a goodly store;
But ruffians met them in the wood,—
Ferraught in battle boldly stood,
Till wounded and o'erpower'd at length,
And stripp'd of all, his failing strength
Just bore him here—and then the child
Renew'd again his moaning wild.

XI.

The tear, down childhood's cheek that flows,
Is like the dewdrop on the rose;
When next the summer breeze comes by,
And waves the bush, the flower is dry.
Won by their care, the orphan Child
Soon on his new protector smiled,
With dimpled cheek and eye so fair,
Through his thick curls of flaxen hair,
But blithest laugh'd that cheek and eye,
When Rokeby's little maid was nigh;
'Twas his, with elder brother's pride,
Matilda's tottering steps to guide;

His native lays in Irish tongue,
To soothe her infant ear he sung,
And primrose twined with daisy fair,
To form a chaplet for her hair.
By lawn, by grove, by brooklet's strand,
The children still were hand in hand,
And good Sir Richard smiling eyed
The early knot so kindly tied.

XII.

But summer months bring wilding shoot
From bud to bloom, from bloom to fruit;
And years draw on our human span,
From child to boy, from boy to man;
And soon in Rokeby's woods is seen
A gallant boy in hunter's green.
He loves to wake the felon boar,
In his dark haunt on Greta's shore,
And loves, against the deer so dun,
To draw the shaft, or lift the gun:
Yet more he loves, in autumn prime,
The hazel's spreading boughs to climb,
And down its cluster'd stores to hail,
Where young Matilda holds her veil.
And she, whose veil receives the shower,
Is alter'd too, and knows her power;
Assumes a monitress's pride, [chide;
Her Redmond's dangerous sports to
Yet listens still to hear him tell
How the grim wild-boar fought and fell,
How at his fall the bugle rung,
Till rock and greenwood answer flung;
Then blesses her, that man can find
A pastime of such savage kind.

XIII.

But Redmond knew to weave his tale
So well with praise of wood and dale,
And knew so well each point to trace,
Gives living interest to the chase,
And knew so well o'er all to throw
His spirit's wild romantic glow, [fear'd,
That, while she blamed, and while she
She loved each venturous tale she heard.
Oft, too, when drifted snow and rain
To bower and hall their steps restrain,
Together they explored the page
Of glowing bard or gifted sage;
Oft, placed the evening fire beside,
The minstrel art alternate tried,
While gladsome harp and lively lay
Bade winter night flit fast away:
Thus, from their childhood blending still
Their sport, their study, and their skill,
An union of the soul they prove,
But must not think that it was love.
But though they dared not, envious Fame
Soon dared to give that union name;
And when so often, side by side,
From year to year the pair she eyed,
She sometimes blamed the good old Knight,
As dull of ear and dim of sight,
Sometimes his purpose would declare,
That young O'Neale should wed his heir.

XIV.

The suit of Wilfrid rent disguise
And bandage from the lovers' eyes;
'Twas plain that Oswald, for his son,
Had Rokeby's favour well-nigh won.
Now must they meet with change of cheer,
With mutual looks of shame and fear;
Now must Matilda stray apart,
To school her disobedient heart:
And Redmond now alone must rue
The love he never can subdue.
But factions rose, and Rokeby sware
No rebel's son should wed his heir;
And Redmond, nurtured while a child
In many a bard's traditions wild,
Now sought the lonely wood or stream,
To cherish there a happier dream,
Of maiden won by sword or lance,
As in the regions of romance;
And count the heroes of his line,
Great Nial of the Pledges Nine,*
Shane-Dymas* wild, and Geraldine,*
And Connan-more, who vow'd his race
For ever to the fight and chase,
And cursed him, of his lineage born,
Should sheathe the sword to reap the corn.
Or leave the mountain and the wold,
To shroud himself in castled hold.
From such examples hope he drew,
And brighten'd as the trumpet blew.

XV.

If brides were won by heart and blade,
Redmond had both, his cause to aid,
And all beside of nurture rare
That might beseem a baron's heir.
Turlough O'Neale, in Erin's strife,
On Rokeby's Lord bestow'd his life,
And well did Rokeby's generous Knight
Young Redmond for the deed requite.
Nor was his liberal care and cost
Upon the gallant stripling lost:
Seek the North Riding broad and wide,
Like Redmond none could steed bestride;
From Tynemouth search to Cumberland,
Like Redmond none could wield a brand;
And then, of humour kind and free,
And bearing him to each degree
With frank and fearless courtesy,
There never youth was form'd to steal
Upon the heart like brave O'Neale.

XVI.

Sir Richard loved him as his son;
And when the days of peace were done,
And to the gales of war he gave
The banner of his sires to wave,
Redmond, distinguish'd by his care,
He chose that honour'd flag to bear,

And named his page—the next degree
In that old time to chivalry.*
In five pitch'd fields he well maintain'd
The honour'd place his worth obtain'd,
And high was Redmond's youthful name
Blazed in the roll of martial fame.
Had fortune smiled on Marston fight,
The eve had seen him dubb'd a knight;
Twice, 'mid the battle's doubtful strife,
Of Rokeby's Lord he saved the life.
But when he saw him prisoner made,
He kiss'd and then resign'd his blade,
And yielded him an easy prey
To those who led the Knight away;
Resolved Matilda's sire should prove
In prison, as in fight, his love.

XVII.

When lovers meet in adverse hour,
'Tis like a sun-glimpse through a shower,
A watery ray, an instant seen
The darkly closing clouds between.
As Redmond on the turf reclined,
The past and present fill'd his mind:
"It was not thus," Affection said,
"I dream'd of my return, dear maid!
Not thus when, from thy trembling hand,
I took the banner and the brand;
When round me, as the bugles blew,
Their blades three hundred warriors drew,
And, while the standard I unroll'd, [bold.
Clash'd their bright arms, with clamour
Where is that banner now?—its pride
Lies whelm'd in Ouse's sullen tide!
Where now these warriors?—in their gore,
They cumber Marston's dismal moor!
And what avails a useless brand,
Held by a captive's shackled hand,
That only would his life retain,
To aid thy sire to bear his chain!"
Thus Redmond to himself apart:
Nor lighter was his rival's heart;
For Wilfrid, while his generous soul
Disdain'd to profit by control,
By many a sign could mark too plain,
Save with such aid, his hopes were vain.—
But now Matilda's accents stole
On the dark visions of their soul,
And bade their mournful musing fly,
Like mist before the zephyr's sigh.

XVIII.

"I need not to my friends recall,
How Mortham shunn'd my father's hall;
A man of silence and of woe,
Yet ever anxious to bestow
On my poor self whate'er could prove
A kinsman's confidence and love.
My feeble aid could sometimes chase
The clouds of sorrow for a space;
But oftener, fix'd beyond my power,
I mark'd his deep despondence lower.
One dismal cause, by all unguess'd,
His fearful confidence confess'd;
And twice it was my hap to see
Examples of that agony,
Which for a season can o'erstrain
And wreck the structure of the brain.
He had the awful power to know
The approaching mental overthrow,
And while his mind had courage yet
To struggle with the dreadful fit,
The victim writhed against its throes,
Like wretch beneath a murderer's blows.
This malady, I well could mark, [dark;
Sprung from some direful cause and
But still he kept its source conceal'd,
Till arming for the civil field;
Then in my charge he bade me hold
A treasure huge of gems and gold,
With this disjointed dismal scroll,
That tells the secret of his soul,
In such wild words as oft betray
A mind by anguish forced astray."—

XIX.

MORTHAM'S HISTORY.

"Matilda! thou hast seen me start,
As if a dagger thrill'd my heart,
When it has happ'd some casual phrase
Waked memory of my former days.
Believe, that few can backward cast
Their thoughts with pleasure on the past;
But I!—my youth was rash and vain,
And blood and rage my manhood stain,
And my grey hairs must now descend
To my cold grave without a friend!
Even thou, Matilda, wilt disown
Thy kinsman, when his guilt is known.
And must I lift the bloody veil,
That hides my dark and fatal tale!
I must—I will—Pale phantom, cease!
Leave me one little hour in peace!
Thus haunted, think'st thou I have skill
Thine own commission to fulfil?
Or, while thou point'st with gesture fierce,
Thy blighted cheek, thy bloody hearse,
How can I paint thee as thou wert,
So fair in face, so warm in heart!

XX.

"Yes, she was fair!—Matilda, thou
Hast a soft sadness on thy brow;
But hers was like the sunny glow,
That laughs on earth and all below!
We wedded secret—there was need—
Differing in country and in creed;
And, when to Mortham's tower she came,
We mention'd not her race and name,
Until thy sire, who fought afar,
Should turn him home from foreign war,
On whose kind influence we relied
To soothe her father's ire and pride.

Few months we lived retired, unknown,
To all but one dear friend alone,
One darling friend—I spare his shame,
I will not write the villain's name!
My trespasses I might forget,
And sue in vengeance for the debt
Due by a brother worm to me,
Ungrateful to God's clemency,
That spared me penitential time,
Nor cut me off amid my crime.—

XXI.

"A kindly smile to all she lent,
But on her husband's friend 'twas bent
So kind, that from its harmless glee,
The wretch misconstrued villainy.
Repulsed in his presumptuous love,
A vengeful snare the traitor wove.
Alone we sat—the flask had flow'd,
My blood with heat unwonted glow'd,
When through the alley'd walk we spied
With hurried step my Edith glide,
Cowering beneath the verdant screen,
As one unwilling to be seen.
Words cannot paint the fiendish smile
That curl'd the traitor's cheek the while!
Fiercely I question'd of the cause;
He made a cold and artful pause,
Then pray'd it might not chafe my mood—
'There was a gallant in the wood!'
We had been shooting at the deer;
My cross-bow (evil chance!) was near:
That ready weapon of my wrath
I caught, and, hasting up the path,
In the yew grove my wife I found,—
A stranger's arms her neck had bound!
I mark'd his heart—the bow I drew—
I loosed the shaft—'twas more than true!
I found my Edith's dying charms
Lock'd in her murder'd brother's arms!—
He came in secret to enquire
Her state, and reconcile her sire.

XXII.

"All fled my rage—the villain first,
Whose craft my jealousy had nursed;
He sought in far and foreign clime
To 'scape the vengeance of his crime.
The manner of the slaughter done
Was known to few—my guilt to none;
Some tale my faithful steward framed—
I know not what—of shaft mis-aim'd;
And even from those the act who knew,
He hid the hand from which it flew.
Untouch'd by human laws I stood,
But GOD had heard the cry of blood!
There is a blank upon my mind,
A fearful vision ill-defined,
Of raving till my flesh was torn,
Of dungeon-bolts and fetters worn—
And when I waked to woe more wild,
And question'd of my infant child—
(Have I not written, that she bare
A boy, like summer morning fair?)
With looks confused, my menials tell
That armèd men in Mortham dell
Beset the nurse's evening way,
And bore her, with her charge, away.
My faithless friend, and none but he,
Could profit by his villainy;
Him, then, I sought, with purpose dread
Of treble vengeance on his head!
He 'scaped me—but my bosom's wound
Some faint relief from wandering found;
And over distant land and sea
I bore my load of misery.

XXIII.

"'Twas then that fate my footsteps led
Among a daring crew and dread,
With whom full oft my hated life
I ventured in such desperate strife,
That even my fierce associates saw
My frantic deeds with doubt and awe.
Much then I learn'd, and much can show,
Of human guilt and human woe,
Yet ne'er have, in my wanderings, known
A wretch whose sorrows match'd my own!—
It chanced that, after battle fray,
Upon the bloody field we lay;
The yellow moon her lustre shed
Upon the wounded and the dead,
While, sense in toil and wassail drown'd,
My ruffian comrades slept around,
There came a voice—its silver tone
Was soft, Matilda, as thine own—
'Ah, wretch!' it said, 'what mak'st thou here,
While unavenged my bloody bier,
While unprotected lives mine heir,
Without a father's name and care?'

XXIV.

"I heard—obey'd—and homeward drew;
The fiercest of our desperate crew
I brought, at time of need to aid
My purposed vengeance, long delay'd.
But, humble be my thanks to Heaven,
That better hopes and thoughts has given,
And by our Lord's dear prayer has taught,
Mercy by mercy must be bought!—
Let me in misery rejoice—
I've seen his face—I've heard his voice—
I claim'd of him my only child—
As he disown'd the theft, he smiled!
That very calm and callous look,
That fiendish sneer his visage took,
As when he said, in scornful mood,
'There is a gallant in the wood!'—
I did not slay him as he stood—
All praise be to my Maker given!
Long suffrance is one path to heaven."

XXV.

Thus far the woeful tale was heard,
When something in the thicket stirr'd.
Up Redmond sprung; the villain Guy
(For he it was that lurk'd so nigh)
Drew back—he durst not cross his steel
A moment's space with brave O'Neale,
For all the treasured gold that rests
In Mortham's iron-banded chests.
Redmond resumed his seat;—he said,
Some roe was rustling in the shade.
Bertram laugh'd grimly when he saw
His timorous comrade backward draw.
"A trusty mate art thou, to fear
A single arm, and aid so near!
Yet have I seen thee mark a deer.
Give me thy carabine—I'll show
An art that thou wilt gladly know,
How thou mayst safely quell a foe."

XXVI.

On hands and knees fierce Bertram drew
The spreading birch and hazels through,
Till he had Redmond full in view;
The gun he levell'd—Mark like this
Was Bertram never known to miss,
When fair opposed to aim there sate
An object of his mortal hate. [seen,
That day young Redmond's death had
But twice Matilda came between
The carabine and Redmond's breast,
Just ere the spring his finger press'd.
A deadly oath the ruffian swore,
But yet his fell design forebore:
"It ne'er," he muttered, "shall be said,
That thus I scath'd thee, haughty maid!"
Then moved to seek more open aim,
When to his side Guy Denzil came:
"Bertram, forbear!—we are undone
For ever, if thou fire the gun.
By all the fiends, an armed force
Descends the dell, of foot and horse!
We perish if they hear a shot—
Madman! we have a safer plot—
Nay, friend, be ruled, and bear thee back!
Behold, down yonder hollow track,
The warlike leader of the band
Comes, with his broadsword in his hand."
Bertram look'd up; he saw, he knew
That Denzil's fears had counsell'd true,
Then cursed his fortune and withdrew,
Threaded the woodlands undescried,
And gained the cave on Greta side.

XXVII.

They whom dark Bertram, in his wrath,
Doom'd to captivity or death,
Their thoughts to one sad subject lent,
Saw not nor heard the ambushment.
Heedless and unconcern'd they sate,
While on the very verge of fate;
Heedless and unconcern'd remain'd,
When Heaven the murderer's arm restrain'd;
As ships drift darkling down the tide,
Nor see the shelves o'er which they glide.
Uninterrupted thus they heard
What Mortham's closing tale declared.
He spoke of wealth as of a load,
By Fortune on a wretch bestow'd,
In bitter mockery of hate,
His cureless woes to aggravate;
But yet he pray'd Matilda's care
Might save that treasure for his heir—
His Edith's son—for still he raved
As confident his life was saved;
In frequent vision, he averr'd,
He saw his face, his voice he heard;
Then argued calm—had murder been,
The blood, the corpses, had been seen;
Some had pretended, too, to mark
On Windermere a stranger bark,
Whose crew, with jealous care, yet mild,
Guarded a female and a child.
While these faint proofs he told and press'd,
Hope seem'd to kindle in his breast;
Though inconsistent, vague, and vain,
It warp'd his judgment and his brain.

XXVIII.

These solemn words his story close:—
"Heaven witness for me, that I chose
My part in this sad civil fight,
Moved by no cause but England's right.
My country's groans have bid me draw
My sword for gospel and for law;—
These righted, I fling arms aside,
And seek my son through Europe wide.
My wealth, on which a kinsman nigh
Already casts a grasping eye,
With thee may unsuspected lie.
When of my death Matilda hears,
Let her retain her trust three years;
If none, from me, the treasure claim,
Perish'd is Mortham's race and name.
Then let it leave her generous hand,
And flow in bounty o'er the land;
Soften the wounded prisoner's lot,
Rebuild the peasant's ruin'd cot;
So spoils, acquired by fight afar,
Shall mitigate domestic war."

XXIX.

The generous youths, who well had known
Of Mortham's mind the powerful tone,
To that high mind, by sorrow swerved,
Gave sympathy his woes deserved;
But Wilfrid chief, who saw reveal'd
Why Mortham wish'd his life conceal'd,
In secret, doubtless, to pursue
The schemes his wilder'd fancy drew.
Thoughtful he heard Matilda tell,
That she would share her father's cell,

His partner of captivity,
Where'er his prison-house should be;
Yet grieved to think that Rokeby-hall,
Dismantled, and forsook by all,
Open to rapine and to stealth,
Had now no safeguard for the wealth
Intrusted by her kinsman kind,
And for such noble use design'd.
"Was Barnard Castle then her choice,"
Wilfrid enquired with hasty voice,
"Since there the victor's laws ordain,
Her father must a space remain?"
A flutter'd hope his accent shook,
A flutter'd joy was in his look.
Matilda hasten'd to reply,
For anger flash'd in Redmond's eye;—
"Duty," she said, with gentle grace,
"Kind Wilfrid, has no choice of place:
Else had I for my sire assign'd
Prison less galling to his mind,
Than that his wild-wood haunts which sees
And hears the murmur of the Tees,
Recalling thus, with every glance,
What captive's sorrow can enhance;
But where those woes are highest, there
Needs Rokeby most his daughter's care."

XXX.

He felt the kindly check she gave,
And stood abash'd—then answer'd grave:
"I sought thy purpose, noble maid,
Thy doubts to clear, thy schemes to aid.
I have beneath mine own command,
So wills my sire, a gallant band,
And well could send some horsemen wight
To bear the treasure forth by night,
And so bestow it as you deem
In these ill days may safest seem."—
"Thanks, gentle Wilfrid, thanks," she said:
"O, be it not one day delay'd!
And, more thy sister-friend to aid,
Be thou thyself content to hold,
In thine own keeping, Mortham's gold,
Safest with thee."—While thus she spoke,
Arm'd soldiers on their converse broke,
The same of whose approach afraid,
The ruffians left their ambuscade.
Their chief to Wilfrid bended low,
Then look'd around as for a foe.
"What mean'st thou, friend?" young Wycliffe said,
"Why thus in arms beset the glade?"—
"That would I gladly learn from you;
For up my squadron as I drew,
To exercise our martial game
Upon the moor of Barninghame,
A stranger told you were waylaid,
Surrounded, and to death betray'd.
He had a leader's voice, I ween,
A falcon glance, a warrior's mien.
He bade me bring you instant aid;
I doubted not, and I obey'd."

XXXI.

Wilfrid changed colour, and, amazed,
Turn'd short, and on the speaker gazed;
While Redmond every thicket round
Track'd earnest as a questing hound,
And Denzil's carabine he found;
Sure evidence, by which they knew
The warning was as kind as true.
Wisest it seem'd, with cautious speed
To leave the dell. It was agreed,
That Redmond, with Matilda fair,
And fitting guard, should home repair;
At nightfall Wilfrid should attend,
With a strong band, his sister-friend,
To bear with her, from Rokeby's bowers
To Barnard Castle's lofty towers,
Secret and safe, the banded chests
In which the wealth of Mortham rests.
This hasty purpose fix'd, they part,
Each with a grieved and anxious heart.

CANTO FIFTH.

I.

THE sultry summer day is done,
The western hills have hid the sun,
But mountain peak and village spire
Retain reflection of his fire.
Old Barnard's towers are purple still,
To those that gaze from Toller-hill;
Distant and high, the tower of Bowes
Like steel upon the anvil glows;
And Stanmore's ridge, behind that lay,
Rich with the spoils of parting day,
In crimson and in gold array'd,
Streaks yet a while the closing shade,
Then slow resigns to darkening heaven
The tints which brighter hours had given.
Thus aged men, full loath and slow,
The vanities of life forego,
And count their youthful follies o'er,
Till Memory lends her light no more.

II.

The eve, that slow on upland fades,
Has darker closed on Rokeby glades,
Where, sunk within their banks profound,
Her guardian streams to meeting wound.
The stately oaks, whose sombre frown
Of noontide made a twilight brown,
Impervious now to fainter light,
Of twilight make an early night.
Hoarse into middle air arose
The vespers of the roosting crows,
And with congenial murmurs seem
To wake the Genii of the stream;
For louder clamour'd Greta's tide,
And Tees in deeper voice replied,

And fitful waked the evening wind,
Fitful in sighs its breath resign'd.
Wilfrid, whose fancy-nurtured soul
Felt in the scene a soft control,
With lighter footstep press'd the ground,
And often paused to look around;
And, though his path was to his love,
Could not but linger in the grove,
To drink the thrilling interest dear,
Of awful pleasure check'd by fear.
Such inconsistent moods have we,
Even when our passions strike the key.

III.

Now, through the wood's dark mazes past,
The opening lawn he reach'd at last,
Where, silver'd by the moonlight ray,
The ancient Hall before him lay.
Those martial terrors long were fled,
That frown'd of old around its head:
The battlements, the turrets grey,
Seem'd half abandoned to decay;*
On barbican and keep of stone
Stern time the foeman's work had done.
Where banners the invader braved,
The harebell now and wallflower waved;
In the rude guard-room, where of yore
Their weary hours the warders wore,
Now, while the cheerful faggots blaze,
On the paved floor the spindle plays;
The flanking guns dismounted lie,
The moat is ruinous and dry,
The grim portcullis gone—and all
The fortress turn'd to peaceful Hall.

IV.

But yet precautions, lately ta'en,
Show'd danger's day revived again;
The court-yard wall show'd marks of care,
The fall'n defences to repair,
Lending such strength as might withstand
The insult of marauding band.
The beams once more were taught to bear
The trembling drawbridge into air,
And not, till questioned o'er and o'er,
For Wilfrid oped the jealous door,
And when he enter'd, bolt and bar
Resumed their place with sullen jar;
Then, as he cross'd the vaulted porch,
The old grey porter raised his torch,
And viewed him o'er, from foot to head,
Ere to the hall his steps he led.
That huge old hall, of knightly state,
Dismantled seem'd and desolate.
The moon through transom-shafts of stone,
Which cross'd the latticed oriels, shone,
And by the mournful light she gave,
The Gothic vault seem'd funeral cave.
Pennon and banner waved no more
O'er beams of stag and tusks of boar,
Nor glimmering arms were marshall'd seen,
To glance those sylvan spoils between.
Those arms, those ensigns, borne away,
Accomplish'd Rokeby's brave array,
But all were lost on Marston's day!
Yet here and there the moonbeams fall
Where armour yet adorns the wall,
Cumbrous of size, uncouth to sight,
And useless in the modern fight!
Like veteran relic of the wars,
Known only by neglected scars.

V.

Matilda soon to greet him came,
And bade them light the evening flame;
Said, all for parting was prepared,
And tarried but for Wilfrid's guard.
But then, reluctant to unfold
His father's avarice of gold,
He hinted, that lest jealous eye
Should on their precious burden pry,
He judged it best the castle gate
To enter when the night wore late;
And therefore he had left command
With those he trusted of his band,
That they should be at Rokeby met,
What time the midnight-watch was set.
Now Redmond came, whose anxious care
Till then was busied to prepare
All needful, meetly to arrange
The mansion for its mournful change.
With Wilfrid's care and kindness pleased,
His cold unready hand he seized,
And press'd it, till his kindly strain
The gentle youth return'd again.
Seem'd as between them this was said,—
"A while let jealousy be dead;
And let our contest be, whose care
Shall best assist this helpless fair."

VI.

There was no speech the truce to bind,
It was a compact of the mind,—
A generous thought, at once impress'd
On either rival's generous breast.
Matilda well the secret took,
From sudden change of mien and look;
And—for not small had been her fear
Of jealous ire and danger near—
Felt, even in her dejected state,
A joy beyond the reach of fate.
They closed beside the chimney's blaze,
And talk'd, and hoped for happier days,
And lent their spirits' rising glow
A while to gild impending woe;—
High privilege of youthful time,
Worth all the pleasure of our prime!
The bickering faggot sparkled bright,
And gave the scene of love to sight,
Bade Wilfrid's cheek more lively glow,
Play'd on Matilda's neck of snow,

Her nut-brown curls and forehead high,
And laughed in Redmond's azure eye.
Two lovers by the maiden sate,
Without a glance of jealous hate;
The maid her lovers sat between,
With open brow and equal mien:
It is a sight but rarely spied,—
Thanks to man's wrath and woman's pride.

VII.

While thus in peaceful guise they sate,
A knock alarmed the outer gate,
And ere the tardy porter stirr'd,
The tinkling of a harp was heard.
A manly voice of mellow swell,
Bore burden to the music well:—

SONG.

"Summer eve is gone and past,
Summer dew is falling fast;
I have wander'd all the day,
Do not bid me farther stray!
Gentle hearts, of gentle kin,
Take the wandering harper in!"

But the stern porter answer gave,
With "Get thee hence, thou strolling knave!
The king wants soldiers; war, I trow,
Were meeter trade for such as thou."
At this unkind reproof, again
Answer'd the ready Minstrel's strain:—

SONG RESUMED.

"Bid not me, in battle-field,
Buckler lift, or broadsword wield!
All my strength and all my art
Is to touch the gentle heart,
With the wizard notes that ring
From the peaceful minstrel-string."—

The porter, all unmoved, replied,—
"Depart in peace, with Heaven to guide;
If longer by the gate thou dwell,
Trust me, thou shalt not part so well."

VIII.

With somewhat of appealing look,
The harper's part young Wilfrid took:
"These notes so wild and ready thrill,
They show no vulgar minstrel's skill;
Hard were his task to seek a home
More distant, since the night is come;
And for his faith I dare engage—
Your Harpool's blood is sour'd by age;
His gate, once readily display'd,
To greet the friend, the poor to aid,
Now even to me, though known of old,
Did but reluctantly unfold."—
"O blame not, as poor Harpool's crime,
An evil of this evil time.
He deems dependent on his care
The safety of his patron's heir,
Nor judges meet to ope the tower
To guest unknown at parting hour,
Urging his duty to excess
Of rough and stubborn faithfulness.
For this poor harper, I would fain
He may relax:—Hark to his strain!"—

IX.

SONG RESUMED.

"I have song of war for knight,
Lay of love for lady bright,
Fairy tale to lull the heir,
Goblin grim the maids to scare.
Dark the night, and long till day,
Do not bid me further stray!

"Rokeby's lords of martial fame,
I can count them name by name;
Legends of their line there be,
Known to few, but known to me;
If you honour Rokeby's kin,
Take the wandering harper in!

"Rokeby's lords had fair regard
For the harp, and for the bard;
Baron's race throve never well,
Where the curse of minstrel fell.
If you love that noble kin,
Take the weary harper in!"—

"Hark! Harpool parleys—there is hope,"
Said Redmond, "that the gate will ope."—
—"For all thy brag and boast, I trow,
Nought know'st thou of the Felon Sow,"
Quoth Harpool, "nor how Greta-side
She roam'd, and Rokeby forest wide;
Nor how Ralph Rokeby gave the beast
To Richmond's friars to make a feast.
Of Gilbert Griffinson the tale
Goes, and of gallant Peter Dale,
That well could strike with sword amain,
And of the valiant son of Spain,
Friar Middleton, and blithe Sir Ralph:
There were a jest to make us laugh!
If thou canst tell it, in yon shed
Thou'st won thy supper and thy bed."

X.

Matilda smiled: "Cold hope," said she,
"From Harpool's love of minstrelsy!
But, for this harper, may we dare,
Redmond, to mend his couch and fare?"—
"O, ask me not!—At minstrel-string
My heart from infancy would spring;
Nor can I hear its simplest strain,
But it brings Erin's dream again,
When placed by Owen Lysagh's knee
(The Filea of O'Neale was he,*
A blind and bearded man, whose eld
Was sacred as a prophet's held),
I've seen a ring of rugged kerne,
With aspects shaggy, wild, and stern,

Enchanted by the master's lay,
Linger around the livelong day,
Shift from wild rage to wilder glee,
To love, to grief, to ecstasy,
And feel each varied change of soul
Obedient to the bard's control.—
Ah, Clandeboy! thy friendly floor
Slieve-Donard's oak shall light no more;*
Nor Owen's harp, beside the blaze,
Tell maiden's love or hero's praise!
The mantling brambles hide thy hearth,
Centre of hospitable mirth;
All undistinguish'd in the glade,
My sires' glad home is prostrate laid,
Their vassals wander wide and far,
Serve foreign lords in distant war,
And now the stranger's sons enjoy
The lovely woods of Clandeboy!"
He spoke, and proudly turn'd aside,
The starting tear to dry and hide.

XI.

Matilda's dark and soften'd eye
Was glistening ere O'Neale's was dry.
Her hand upon his arm she laid,—
"It is the will of Heaven," she said.
"And think'st thou, Redmond, I can part
From this loved home with lightsome heart,
Leaving to wild neglect whate'er
Even from my infancy was dear?
For in this calm domestic bound
Were all Matilda's pleasures found.
That hearth, my sire was wont to grace,
Full soon may be a stranger's place;
This hall, in which a child I play'd,
Like thine, dear Redmond, lowly laid,
The bramble and the thorn may braid;
Or, pass'd for aye from me and mine,
It ne'er may shelter Rokeby's line.
Yet is this consolation given,
My Redmond,—'tis the will of Heaven."
Her word, her action, and her phrase,
Were kindly as in early days;
For cold reserve had lost its power,
In sorrow's sympathetic hour.
Young Redmond dared not trust his voice;
But rather had it been his choice
To share that melancholy hour,
Than, arm'd with all a chieftain's power,
In full possession to enjoy
Slieve-Donard wide, and Clandeboy.

XII.

The blood left Wilfrid's ashen cheek;
Matilda sees, and hastes to speak.—
"Happy in friendship's ready aid,
Let all my murmurs here be staid!
And Rokeby's Maiden will not part
From Rokeby's hall with moody heart,
This night at least, for Rokeby's fame,
The hospitable hearth shall flame,
And, ere its native heir retire,
Find for the wanderer rest and fire,
While this poor harper, by the blaze,
Recounts the tale of other days.
Bid Harpool ope the door with speed,
Admit him, and relieve each need.—
Meantime, kind Wycliffe, wilt thou try
Thy minstrel skill?—Nay, no reply—
And look not sad!—I guess thy thought,
Thy verse with laurels would be bought;
And poor Matilda, landless now,
Has not a garland for thy brow.
True, I must leave sweet Rokeby's glades,
Nor wander more in Greta's shades;
But sure, no rigid jailer, thou
Wilt a short prison-walk allow, [will,
Where summer flowers grow wild at
On Marwood-chase and Toller-hill;*
Then holly green and lily gay
Shall twine in guerdon of thy lay."
The mournful youth, a space aside,
To tune Matilda's harp applied;
And then a low sad descant rung,
As prelude to the lay he sung.

XIII.

THE CYPRESS WREATH.

O, Lady, twine no wreath for me,
Or twine it of the cypress-tree!
Too lively glow the lilies light,
The varnish'd holly's all too bright,
The May-flower and the eglantine
May shade a brow less sad than mine;
But, Lady, weave no wreath for me,
Or weave it of the cypress-tree!

Let dimpled Mirth his temples twine
With tendrils of the laughing vine;
The manly oak, the pensive yew,
To patriot and to sage be due;
The myrtle bough bids lovers live,
But that Matilda will not give;
Then, Lady, twine no wreath for me,
Or twine it of the cypress-tree!

Let merry England proudly rear
Her blended roses, bought so dear;
Let Albin bind her bonnet blue
With heath and harebell dipp'd in dew;
On favour'd Erin's crest be seen
The flower she loves of emerald green—
But, Lady, twine no wreath for me,
Or twine it of the cypress-tree.

Strike the wild harp, while maids pre-
The ivy meet for minstrel's hair; [pare
And, while his crown of laurel-leaves,
With bloody hand the victor weaves,
Let the loud trump his triumph tell;
But when you hear the passing-bell,
Then, Lady, twine a wreath for me,
And twine it of the cypress-tree

Yes! twine for me the cypress bough;
But, O Matilda, twine not now!
Stay till a few brief months are past,
And I have look'd and loved my last!
When villagers my shroud bestrew
With pansies, rosemary, and rue,—
Then, Lady, weave a wreath for me,
And weave it of the cypress-tree.

XIV.

O'Neale observed the starting tear,
And spoke with kind and blithesome cheer—
"No, noble Wilfrid! ere the day
When mourns the land thy silent lay,
Shall many a wreath be freely wove
By hand of friendship and of love.
I would not wish that rigid Fate
Had doom'd thee to a captive's state,
Whose hands are bound by honour's law,
Who wears a sword he must not draw:
But were it so, in minstrel pride
The land together would we ride,
On prancing steeds, like harpers old,
Bound for the halls of barons bold;
Each lover of the lyre we'd seek,
From Michael's Mount to Skiddaw's Peak,
Survey wild Albin's mountain strand,
And roam green Erin's lovely land;
While thou the gentler souls should move,
With lay of pity and of love,
And I, thy mate, in rougher strain,
Would sing of war and warriors slain.
Old England's bards were vanquish'd then,
And Scotland's vaunted Hawthornden,†
And, silenced on Iernian shore,
M'Curtin's harp should charm no more!"
In lively mood he spoke, to wile
From Wilfrid's woe-worn cheek a smile.

XV.

"But," said Matilda, "ere thy name,
Good Redmond, gain its destined fame,
Say, wilt thou kindly deign to call
Thy brother-minstrel to the hall?
Bid all the household, too, attend,
Each in his rank a humble friend;
I know their faithful hearts will grieve
When their poor Mistress takes her leave;
So let the horn and beaker flow
To mitigate their parting woe."
The harper came;—in youth's first prime
Himself; in mode of olden time
His garb was fashion'd, to express
The ancient English minstrel's dress,*
A seemly gown of Kendal green,
With gorget closed of silver sheen;
His harp in silken scarf was slung,
And by his side an anlace hung.

† Drummond of Hawthornden was in the zenith of his reputation as a poet during the Civil Wars. He died in 1649.

It seem'd some masquer's quaint array,
For revel or for holiday.

XVI.

He made obeisance with a free
Yet studied air of courtesy.
Each look and accent, framed to please,
Seem'd to affect a playful ease;
His face was of that doubtful kind,
That wins the eye, but not the mind;
Yet harsh it seem'd to deem amiss
Of brow so young and smooth as this.
His was the subtle look and sly,
That, spying all, seems nought to spy;
Round all the group his glances stole,
Unmark'd themselves, to mark the whole,
Yet sunk beneath Matilda's look,
Nor could the eye of Redmond brook.
To the suspicious, or the old,
Subtle and dangerous and bold
Had seem'd this self-invited guest;
But young our lovers,—and the rest,
Wrapt in their sorrow and their fear,
At parting of their Mistress dear,
Tear-blinded, to the Castle-hall,
Came as to bear her funeral pall.

XVII.

All that expression base was gone,
When waked the guest his minstrel tone;
It fled at inspiration's call,
As erst the demon fled from Saul.
More noble glance he cast around,
More free-drawn breath inspired the sound,
His pulse beat bolder and more high,
In all the pride of minstrelsy!
Alas! too soon that pride was o'er,
Sunk with the lay that bade it soar!
His soul resumed, with habit's chain,
Its vices wild, and follies vain,
And gave the talent, with him born,
To be a common curse and scorn.
Such was the youth whom Rokeby's Maid,
With condescending kindness, pray'd
Here to renew the strains she loved,
At distance heard and well approved.

XVIII.

SONG.

The Harp.

I was a wild and wayward boy,
My childhood scorn'd each childish toy;
Retired from all, reserved and coy,
To musing prone,
I woo'd my solitary joy,
My Harp alone!

My youth, with bold Ambition's mood,
Despised the humble stream and wood,
Where my poor father's cottage stood,
To fame unknown;—
What should my soaring views make good?
My Harp alone!

Love came with all his frantic fire,
And wild romance of vain desire:
The baron's daughter heard my lyre,
And prais'd the tone;—
What could presumptuous hope inspire?
My Harp alone!

At manhood's touch the bubble burst,
And manhood's pride the vision curst,
And all that had my folly nursed
Love's sway to own;
Yet spared the spell that lull'd me first,
My Harp alone!

Woe came with war, and want with woe;
And it was mine to undergo
Each outrage of the rebel foe:—
Can aught atone
My fields laid waste, my cot laid low?
My Harp alone!

Ambition's dreams I've seen depart,
Have rued of penury the smart,
Have felt of love the venom'd dart,
When hope was flown:
Yet rests one solace to my heart,—
My Harp alone!

Then over mountain, moor, and hill,
My faithful Harp, I'll bear thee still;
And when this life of want and ill
Is wellnigh gone,
Thy strings mine elegy shall thrill,
My Harp alone!

XIX.

"A pleasing lay!" Matilda said;
But Harpool shook his old grey head,
And took his baton and his torch,
To seek his guard-room in the porch.
Edmund observed, with sudden change,
Among the strings his fingers range,
Until they waked a bolder glee
Of military melody;
Then paused amid the martial sound,
And look'd with well-feign'd fear around;—
"None to this noble house belong,"
He said, "that would a Minstrel wrong,
Whose fate has been, through good and ill,
To love his Royal Master still;
And, with your honour'd leave, would fain
Rejoice you with a loyal strain."
Then, as assured by sign and look,
The warlike tone again he took;
And Harpool stopp'd, and turned to hear
A ditty of the Cavalier.

XX.

SONG.

The Cavalier.

While the dawn on the mountain was misty and grey,
My true love has mounted his steed, and away
Over hill, over valley, o'er dale, and o'er down,—
Heaven shield the brave Gallant that fights for the Crown!

He has doff'd the silk doublet the breast-plate to bear,
He has placed the steel-cap o'er his long-flowing hair,
From his belt to his stirrup his broad-sword hangs down,—
Heaven shield the brave Gallant that fights for the Crown!

For the rights of fair England that broad-sword he draws;
Her King is his leader, her Church is his cause;
His watchword is honour, his pay is renown,—
GOD strike with the Gallant that strikes for the Crown!

They may boast of their Fairfax, their Waller, and all Hall;
The roundheaded rebels of Westminster Hall;
But tell these bold traitors of London's proud town,
That the spears of the North have encircled the Crown.

There's Derby and Cavendish, dread of their foes;
There's Erin's high Ormond, and Scotland's Montrose!
Would you match the base Skippon, and Massey, and Brown,
With the Barons of England, that fight for the Crown?

Now joy to the crest of the brave Cavalier!
Be his banner unconquer'd, resistless his spear,
Till in peace and in triumph his toils he may drown
In a pledge to fair England, her Church, and her Crown.

XXI.

"Alas!" Matilda said, "that strain,
Good Harper, now is heard in vain!
The time has been, at such a sound,
When Rokeby's vassals gather'd round,
An hundred manly hearts would bound;
But now, the stirring verse we hear,
Like trump in dying soldier's ear!
Listless and sad the notes we own,
The power to answer them is flown.
Yet not without his meet applause,
Be he that sings the rightful cause,
Even when the crisis of its fate
To human eye seems desperate.
While Rokeby's Heir such power retains,
Let this slight guerdon pay thy pains:—
And, lend thy harp; I fain would try
If my poor skill can aught supply,
Ere yet I leave my father's hall,
To mourn the cause in which we fall."

XXII.

The harper, with a downcast look,
And trembling hand, her bounty took.—

As yet, the conscious pride of art
Had steel'd him in his treacherous part;
A powerful spring, of force unguess'd,
That hath each gentler mood suppress'd,
And reign'd in many a human breast—
From his that plans the red campaign,
To his that wastes the woodland reign.
The failing wing, the blood-shot eye,—
The sportsman marks with apathy,
Each feeling of his victim's ill
Drown'd in his own successful skill.
The veteran, too, who now no more
Aspires to head the battle's roar,
Loves still the triumph of his art,
And traces on the pencill'd chart
Some stern invader's destined way,
Through blood and ruin, to his prey;
Patriots to death, and towns to flame,
He dooms, to raise another's name,
And shares the guilt, though not the fame.
What pays him for his span of time
Spent in premeditating crime?
What against pity arms his heart?—
It is the conscious pride of art.

XXIII.

But principles in Edmund's mind
Were baseless, vague, and undefined.
His soul, like bark with rudder lost,
On Passion's changeful tide was tost;
Nor Vice nor Virtue had the power
Beyond the impression of the hour;
And, O! when Passion rules, how rare
The hours that fall to Virtue's share!
Yet now she roused her—for the pride,
That lack of sterner guilt supplied,
Could scarce support him when arose
The lay that mourn'd Matilda's woes.

SONG.

The Farewell.

The sound of Rokeby's woods I hear,
  They mingle with the song:
Dark Greta's voice is in mine ear,
  I must not hear them long.
From every loved and native haunt
  The native Heir must stray,
And, like a ghost whom sunbeams daunt,
  Must part before the day.

Soon from the halls my fathers rear'd,
  Their scutcheons may descend,
A line so long beloved and fear'd
  May soon obscurely end.
No longer here Matilda's tone
  Shall bid those echoes swell;
Yet shall they hear her proudly own
  The cause in which we fell.

The Lady paused, and then again
Resumed the lay in loftier strain.

XXIV.

Let our halls and towers decay,
  Be our name and line forgot,
Lands and manors pass away,—
  We but share our Monarch's lot.
If no more our annals show
  Battles won and banners taken,
Still in death, defeat, and woe,
  Ours be loyalty unshaken!

Constant still in danger's hour,
  Princes own'd our fathers' aid;
Lands and honours, wealth and power,
  Well their loyalty repaid.
Perish wealth, and power, and pride!
  Mortal boons by mortals given;
But let Constancy abide,—
  Constancy's the gift of Heaven.

XXV.

While thus Matilda's lay was heard,
A thousand thoughts in Edmund stirr'd.
In peasant life he might have known
As fair a face, as sweet a tone;
But village notes could ne'er supply
That rich and varied melody;
And ne'er in cottage-maid was seen
The easy dignity of mien,
Claiming respect, yet waiving state,
That marks the daughters of the great.
Yet not, perchance, had these alone
His scheme of purposed guilt o'erthrown;
But while her energy of mind
Superior rose to griefs combined,
Lending its kindling to her eye,
Giving her form new majesty,—
To Edmund's thought Matilda seem'd
The very object he had dream'd;
When, long ere guilt his soul had known,
In Winston bowers he mused alone,
Taxing his fancy to combine
The face, the air, the voice divine,
Of princess fair, by cruel fate
Reft of her honours, power, and state,
Till to her rightful realm restored
By destined hero's conquering sword.

XXVI.

"Such was my vision!" Edmund thought;
"And have I, then, the ruin wrought
Of such a maid, that fancy ne'er
In fairest vision form'd her peer?
Was it my hand that could unclose
The postern to her ruthless foes?
Foes, lost to honour, law, and faith—
Their kindest mercy sudden death!
Have I done this? I! who have swore,
That if the globe such angel bore,
I would have traced its circle broad,
To kiss the ground on which she trode!—
And now—O! would that earth would rive
And close upon me while alive!—

Is there no hope?—is all then lost?—
Bertram's already on his post!
Even now, beside the Hall's arch'd door,
I saw his shadow cross the floor!
He was to wait my signal strain—
A little respite thus we gain:
By what I heard the menials say,
Young Wycliffe's troop are on their way—
Alarm precipitates the crime!
My harp must wear away the time."—
And then, in accents faint and low,
He falter'd forth a tale of woe.

XXVII.

BALLAD.

"And whither would you lead me, then?"
Quoth the Friar of orders grey;
And the Ruffians twain replied again,
"By a dying woman to pray."—

"I see," he said, "a lovely sight,
A sight bodes little harm,
A lady as a lily bright,
With an infant on her arm."—

"Then do thine office, Friar grey,
And see thou shrive her free!
Else shall the sprite, that parts to-night,
Fling all its guilt on thee.

"Let mass be said, and trentals read,
When thou'rt to convent gone,
And bid the bell of Saint Benedict
Toll out its deepest tone."

The shrift is done, the Friar is gone,
Blindfolded as he came—
Next morning, all in Littlecot Hall
Were weeping for their dame.

Wild Darrell is an alter'd man,
The village crones can tell;
He looks pale as clay, and strives to pray,
If he hears the convent bell.

If prince or peer cross Darrell's way,
He'll beard him in his pride—
If he meet a Friar of orders grey,
He droops and turns aside.

XXVIII.

"Harper! methinks thy magic lays,"
Matilda said, "can goblins raise!
Wellnigh my fancy can discern,
Near the dark porch, a visage stern;
E'en now, in yonder shadowy nook,
I see it!—Redmond, Wilfrid, look!—
A human form distinct and clear—
God, for thy mercy!—It draws near!"
She saw too true. Stride after stride,
The centre of that chamber wide
Fierce Bertram gain'd; then made a stand,
And, proudly waving with his hand,
Thunder'd—"Be still, upon your lives!—
He bleeds who speaks, he dies who strives."
Behind their chief, the robber crew
Forth from the darken'd portal drew
In silence—save that echo dread
Return'd their heavy measured tread.
The lamp's uncertain lustre gave
Their arms to gleam, their plumes to wave;
File after file in order pass,
Like forms on Banquo's mystic glass.
Then, halting at their leader's sign,
At once they form'd and curved their line,
Hemming within its crescent drear
Their victims, like a herd of deer.
Another sign, and to the aim
Levell'd at once their muskets came,
As waiting but their chieftain's word,
To make their fatal volley heard.

XXIX.

Back in a heap the menials drew;
Yet, even in mortal terror, true,
Their pale and startled group oppose
Between Matilda and the foes.
"O, haste thee, Wilfrid!" Redmond cried;
"Undo that wicket by thy side!
Bear hence Matilda—gain the wood—
The pass may be a while made good—
Thy band, ere this, must sure be nigh—
O speak not—dally not—but fly!"
While yet the crowd their motions hide,
Through the low wicket door they glide.
Through vaulted passages they wind,
In Gothic intricacy twined;
Wilfrid half led, and half he bore,
Matilda to the postern-door,
And safe beneath the forest tree,
The Lady stands at liberty.
The moonbeams, the fresh gale's caress,
Renew'd suspended consciousness;—
"Where's Redmond?" eagerly she cries:
"Thou answer'st not—he dies! he dies!
And thou hast left him, all bereft
Of mortal aid—with murderers left!
I know it well—he would not yield
His sword to man—his doom is seal'd!
For my scorn'd life, which thou hast bought
At price of his, I thank thee not."

XXX.

The unjust reproach, the angry look,
The heart of Wilfrid could not brook.
"Lady," he said, "my band so near,
In safety thou mayst rest thee here.
For Redmond's death thou shalt not
If mine can buy his safe return." [mourn,
He turn'd away—his heart throbb'd high,
The tear was bursting from his eye;
The sense of her injustice press'd
Upon the Maid's distracted breast,—
"Stay, Wilfrid, stay! all aid is vain!"
He heard, but turn'd him not again;
He reaches now the postern-door,
Now enters—and is seen no more.

XXXI.

With all the agony that e'er
Was gender'd 'twixt suspense and fear,
She watch'd the line of windows tall,
Whose Gothic lattice lights the Hall,
Distinguish'd by the paly red
The lamps in dim reflection shed,
While all beside, in wan moonlight,
Each grated casement glimmer'd white.
No sight of harm, no sound of ill,
It is a deep and midnight still,
Who look'd upon the scene, had guess'd
All in the Castle were at rest—
When sudden on the windows shone
A lightning flash, just seen and gone!
A shot is heard—Again the flame
Flash'd thick and fast—a volley came!
Then echo'd wildly, from within,
Of shout and scream the mingled din,
And weapon-clash, and maddening cry,
Of those who kill, and those who die!—
As fill'd the Hall with sulphurous smoke,
More red, more dark, the death-flash broke;
And forms were on the lattice cast,
That struck, or struggled, as they past.

XXXII.

What sounds upon the midnight wind
Approach so rapidly behind?
It is—it is—the tramp of steeds,—
Matilda hears the sound,—she speeds,—
Seizes upon the leader's rein—
"O, haste to aid, ere aid be vain!
Fly to the postern—gain the Hall!"
From saddle spring the troopers all;
Their gallant steeds, at liberty,
Run wild along the moonlight lea.
But, ere they burst upon the scene,
Full stubborn had the conflict been.
When Bertram mark'd Matilda's flight,
It gave the signal for the fight;
And Rokeby's veterans, seam'd with scars
Of Scotland's and of Erin's wars,
Their momentary panic o'er,
Stood to the arms which then they bore
(For they were weapon'd, and prepared
Their mistress on her way to guard).
Then cheer'd them to the fight O'Neale,
Then peal'd the shot, and clash'd the steel;
The war-smoke soon with sable breath
Darken'd the scene of blood and death,
While on the few defenders close
The Bandits, with redoubled blows,
And, twice driven back, yet fierce and fell
Renew the charge with frantic yell.

XXXIII.

Wilfrid has fall'n—but o'er him stood
Young Redmond, soil'd with smoke and blood,
Cheering his mates with heart and hand
Still to make good their desperate stand.—
"Up, comrades, up! In Rokeby halls
Ne'er be it said our courage falls.
What! faint ye for their savage cry,
Or do the smoke-wreaths daunt your eye?
These rafters have return'd a shout
As loud at Rokeby's wassail rout,
As thick a smoke these hearths have given
At Hallow-tide or Christmas-even.
Stand to it yet! renew the fight,
For Rokeby's and Matilda's right!
These slaves! they dare not, hand to hand,
Bide buffet from a true man's brand."
Impetuous, active, fierce, and young,
Upon the advancing foes he sprung.
Woe to the wretch at whom is bent
His brandish'd falchion's sheer descent!
Backward they scatter'd as he came,
Like wolves before the levin flame,
When, 'mid their howling conclave driven,
Hath glanced the thunderbolt of heaven.
Bertram rush'd on—But Harpool clasp'd
His knees, although in death he gasp'd,
His falling corpse before him flung,
And round the trammell'd ruffian clung.
Just then, the soldiers fill'd the dome,
And, shouting, charged the felons home
So fiercely, that, in panic dread,
They broke, they yielded, fell, or fled.
Bertram's stern voice they heed no more,
Though heard above the battle's roar;
While, trampling down the dying man,
He strove, with volley'd threat and ban,
In scorn of odds, in fate's despite,
To rally up the desperate fight.

XXXIV.

Soon murkier clouds the Hall enfold,
Than e'er from battle-thunders roll'd;
So dense, the combatants scarce know
To aim or to avoid the blow.
Smothering and blindfold grows the fight—
But soon shall dawn a dismal light!
'Mid cries, and clashing arms, there came
The hollow sound of rushing flame;
New horrors on the tumult dire
Arise—the Castle is on fire!
Doubtful, if chance had cast the brand,
Or frantic Bertram's desperate hand.
Matilda saw, for frequent broke
From the dim casements gusts of smoke.
Yon tower, which late so clear defined
On the fair hemisphere reclined,
That, pencill'd on its azure pure,
The eye could count each embrazure,
Now, swathed within the sweeping cloud,
Seems giant-spectre in his shroud;
Till, from each loop-hole flashing light,
A spout of fire shines ruddy bright,

And, gathering to united glare,
Streams high into the midnight air;
A dismal beacon, far and wide
That waken'd Greta's slumbering side.
Soon all beneath, through gallery long,
And pendant arch, the fire flash'd strong,
Snatching whatever could maintain,
Raise, or extend, its furious reign;
Startling, with closer cause of dread,
The females who the conflict fled,
And now rush'd forth upon the plain,
Filling the air with clamours vain.

XXXV.

But ceased not yet, the Hall within,
The shriek, the shout, the carnage-din,
Till bursting lattices give proof
The flames have caught the rafter'd roof.
What! wait they till its beams amain
Crash on the slayers and the slain?
The alarm is caught—the drawbridge falls,
The warriors hurry from the walls,
But, by the conflagration's light,
Upon the lawn renew the fight.
Each straggling felon down was hew'd,
Not one could gain the sheltering wood;
But forth the affrighted harper sprung,
And to Matilda's robe he clung.
Her shriek, entreaty, and command,
Stopp'd the pursuer's lifted hand.
Denzil and he alive were ta'en;
The rest, save Bertram, all are slain.

XXXVI.

And where is Bertram?—Soaring high,
The general flame ascends the sky;
In gather'd group the soldiers gaze
Upon the broad and roaring blaze,
When, like infernal demon, sent
Red from his penal element,
To plague and to pollute the air,—
His face all gore, on fire his hair,
Forth from the central mass of smoke
The giant form of Bertram broke!
His brandish'd sword on high he rears,
Then plunged among opposing spears;
Round his left arm his mantle truss'd,
Received and foil'd three lances' thrust,
Nor these his headlong course withstood,
Like reeds he snapp'd the tough ash-wood.
In vain his foes around him clung;
With matchless force aside he flung
Their boldest,—as the bull, at bay,
Tosses the ban-dogs from his way,
Through forty foes his path he made,
And safely gain'd the forest glade.

XXXVII.

Scarce was this final conflict o'er,
When from the postern Redmond bore
Wilfrid, who, as of life bereft,
Had in the fatal Hall been left,
Deserted there by all his train;
But Redmond saw, and turn'd again.—
Beneath an oak he laid him down,
That in the blaze gleam'd ruddy brown,
And then his mantle's clasp undid;
Matilda held his drooping head,
Till, given to breathe the freer air,
Returning life repaid their care.
He gazed on them with heavy sigh,—
"I could have wish'd even thus to die!"
No more he said—for now with speed
Each trooper had regain'd his steed;
The ready palfreys stood array'd,
For Redmond and for Rokeby's Maid;
Two Wilfrid on his horse sustain,
One leads his charger by the rein.
But oft Matilda look'd behind,
As up the Vale of Tees they wind,
Where far the mansion of her sires
Beacon'd the dale with midnight fires.
In gloomy arch above them spread,
The clouded heaven lower'd bloody red;
Beneath, in sombre light, the flood
Appear'd to roll in waves of blood.
Then, one by one, was heard to fall
The tower, the donjon-keep, the hall.
Each rushing down with thunder sound,
A space the conflagration drown'd;
Till, gathering strength, again it rose,
Announced its triumph in its close,
Shook wide its light the landscape o'er,
Then sunk—and Rokeby was no more!

CANTO SIXTH.

I.

THE summer sun, whose early power
Was wont to gild Matilda's bower,
And rouse her with his matin ray
Her duteous orisons to pay,—
That morning sun has three times seen
The flowers unfold on Rokeby green,
But sees no more the slumbers fly
From fair Matilda's hazel eye;
That morning sun has three times broke
On Rokeby's glades of elm and oak,
But, rising from their sylvan screen,
Marks no grey turrets glance between.
A shapeless mass lie keep and tower,
That, hissing to the morning shower,
Can but with smouldering vapour pay
The early smile of summer day.
The peasant, to his labour bound,
Pauses to view the blacken'd mound,
Striving, amid the ruin'd space,
Each well-remembered spot to trace.
That length of frail and fire-scorch'd wall
Once screen'd the hospitable hall;
When yonder broken arch was whole,
'Twas there was dealt the weekly dole;

And where yon tottering columns nod,
The chapel sent the hymn to God.—
So flits the world's uncertain span!
Nor zeal for God, nor love for man,
Gives mortal monuments a date
Beyond the power of Time and Fate.
The towers must share the builder's doom;
Ruin is theirs, and his a tomb:
But better boon benignant Heaven
To Faith and Charity has given,
And bids the Christian hope sublime
Transcend the bounds of Fate and Time.

II.

Now the third night of summer came,
Since that which witness'd Rokeby's flame.
On Brignall cliffs and Scargill brake
The owlet's homilies awake,
The bittern scream'd from rush and flag,
The raven slumber'd on his crag,
Forth from his den the otter drew,—
Grayling and trout their tyrant knew,
As between reed and sedge he peers,
With fierce round snout and sharpen'd ears,
Or, prowling by the moonbeam cool,
Watches the stream or swims the pool;—
Perch'd on his wonted eyrie high,
Sleep seal'd the tercelet's wearied eye,
That all the day had watch'd so well
The cushat dart across the dell.
In dubious beam reflected shone
That lofty cliff of pale grey stone,
Beside whose base the secret cave
To rapine late a refuge gave.
The crag's wild crest of copse and yew
On Greta's breast dark shadows threw;
Shadows that met or shunn'd the sight,
With every change of fitful light;
As hope and fear alternate chase
Our course through life's uncertain race.

III.

Gliding by crag and copsewood green,
A solitary form was seen
To trace with stealthy pace the wold,
Like fox that seeks the midnight fold,
And pauses oft, and cowers dismay'd,
At every breath that stirs the shade.
He passes now the ivy bush,—
The owl has seen him, and is hush;
He passes now the dodder'd oak,—
He heard the startled raven croak:
Lower and lower he descends,
Rustle the leaves, the brushwood bends;
The otter hears him tread the shore,
And dives, and is beheld no more;
And by the cliff of pale grey stone
The midnight wanderer stands alone.
Methinks, that by the moon we trace
A well-remember'd form and face!
That stripling shape, that cheek so pale,
Combine to tell a rueful tale,
Of powers misused, of passion's force,
Of guilt, of grief, and of remorse!
'Tis Edmund's eye, at every sound
That flings that guilty glance around;
'Tis Edmund's trembling haste divides
The brushwood that the cavern hides;
And, when its narrow porch lies bare,
'Tis Edmund's form that enters there.

IV.

His flint and steel have sparkled bright,
A lamp hath lent the cavern light.
Fearful and quick his eye surveys
Each angle of the gloomy maze.
Since last he left that stern abode,
It seem'd as none its floor had trode;
Untouch'd appear'd the various spoil,
The purchase of his comrades' toil;
Masks and disguises grim'd with mud,
Arms broken and defiled with blood,
And all the nameless tools that aid
Night-felons in their lawless trade,
Upon the gloomy walls were hung,
Or lay in nooks obscurely flung.
Still on the sordid board appear
The relics of the noontide cheer:
Flagons and emptied flasks were there,
And bench o'erthrown, and shatter'd chair;
And all around the semblance show'd,
As when the final revel glow'd,
When the red sun was setting fast,
And parting pledge Guy Denzil past.
"To Rokeby treasure-vaults!" they quaff'd,
And shouted loud and wildly laugh'd,
Pour'd maddening from the rocky door,
And parted—to return no more!
They found in Rokeby vaults their doom,—
A bloody death, a burning tomb!

V.

There his own peasant dress he spies,
Doff'd to assume that quaint disguise;
And, shuddering, thought upon his glee,
When prank'd in garb of minstrelsy.
"O, be the fatal art accurst,"
He cried, "that moved my folly first;
Till, bribed by bandits' base applause,
I burst through God's and Nature's laws!
Three summer days are scantly past
Since I have trod this cavern last,
A thoughtless wretch, and prompt to err—
But, O, as yet no murderer!
Even now I list my comrades' cheer,
That general laugh is in mine ear,
Which raised my pulse and steel'd my heart,
As I rehearsed my treacherous part—
And would that all since then could seem
The phantom of a fever's dream!
But fatal Memory notes too well
The horrors of the dying yell

From my despairing mates that broke,
When flash'd the fire and roll'd the smoke;
When the avengers shouting came,
And hemm'd us 'twixt the sword and flame!
My frantic flight,—the lifted brand,—
That angel's interposing hand?——
If, for my life from slaughter freed,
I yet could pay some grateful meed!
Perchance this object of my quest
May aid"—he turn'd, nor spoke the rest.

VI.

Due northward from the rugged hearth,
With paces five he metes the earth,
Then toil'd with mattock to explore
The entrails of the cabin floor,
Nor paused till, deep beneath the ground,
His search a small steel casket found.
Just as he stoop'd to loose its hasp,
His shoulder felt a giant grasp;
He started, and look'd up aghast, [fast.
Then shriek'd!—'Twas Bertram held him
"Fear not!" he said; but who could hear
That deep stern voice, and cease to fear?
"Fear not!—By Heaven! he shakes as much
As partridge in the falcon's clutch:"—
He raised him, and unloosed his hold,
While from the opening casket roll'd
A chain and reliquaire of gold.
Bertram beheld it with surprise,
Gazed on its fashion and device,
Then, cheering Edmund as he could,
Somewhat he smooth'd his rugged mood:
For still the youth's half-lifted eye
Quiver'd with terror's agony,
And sidelong glanced, as to explore,
In meditated flight, the door.
"Sit," Bertram said, "from danger free:
Thou canst not, and thou shalt not, flee.
Chance brings me hither; hill and plain
I've sought for refuge-place in vain.
And tell me now, thou aguish boy, [toy?
What mak'st thou here? what means this
Denzil and thou, I mark'd, were ta'en;
What lucky chance unbound your chain?
I deem'd, long since on Baliol's tower,
Your heads were warp'd with sun and shower.
Tell me the whole—and, mark! nought e'er
Chafes me like falsehood, or like fear."
Gathering his courage to his aid,
But trembling still, the youth obey'd.

VII.

"Denzil and I two nights pass'd o'er
In fetters on the dungeon floor.
A guest the third sad morrow brought—
Our hold dark Oswald Wycliffe sought,
And eyed my comrade long askance,
With fix'd and penetrating glance.
'Guy Denzil art thou call'd?'—'The same.'—
'At court who served wild Buckinghame;
Thence banish'd, won a keeper's place,
So Villiers will'd, in Marwood-chase;
That lost—I need not tell thee why—
Thou mad'st thy wit thy want supply,
Then fought for Rokeby:—Have I guess'd
My prisoner right?'—'At thy behest.'—
He paused a while, and then went on
With low and confidential tone;—
Me, as I judge, not then he saw,
Close nestled in my couch of straw.—
'List to me, Guy. Thou know'st the great
Have frequent need of what they hate;
Hence, in their favour oft we see
Unscrupled, useful men like thee.
Were I disposed to bid thee live,
What pledge of faith hast thou to give?'

VIII.

"The ready Fiend, who never yet
Hath failed to sharpen Denzil's wit,
Prompted his lie—'His only child
Should rest his pledge.'—The Baron smiled,
And turn'd to me—'Thou art his son?'
I bow'd—our fetters were undone,
And we were led to hear apart
A dreadful lesson of his art.
Wilfrid, he said, his heir and son,
Had fair Matilda's favour won;
And long since had their union been,
But for her father's bigot spleen,
Whose brute and blindfold party-rage
Would, force per force, her hand engage
To a base kern of Irish earth,
Unknown his lineage and his birth,
Save that a dying ruffian bore
The infant brat to Rokeby door.
Gentle restraint, he said, would lead
Old Rokeby to enlarge his creed;
But fair occasion he must find
For such restraint, well meant and kind,
The Knight being render'd to his charge
But as a prisoner at large.

IX.

"He school'd us in a well-forged tale,
Of scheme the Castle walls to scale,
To which was leagued each Cavalier
That dwells upon the Tyne and Wear;
That Rokeby, his parole forgot,
Had dealt with us to aid the plot.
Such was the charge, which Denzil's zeal
Of hate to Rokeby and O'Neale
Proffer'd, as witness, to make good,
Even though the forfeit were their blood.
I scrupled, until o'er and o'er
His prisoners' safety Wycliffe swore;
And then—alas! what needs there more?

I knew I should not live to say
The proffer I refused that day;
Asham'd to live, yet loath to die,
I soil'd me with their infamy!"—
"Poor youth!" said Bertram, "wavering still,
Unfit alike for good or ill!
But what fell next?"—"Soon as at large
Was scroll'd and sign'd our fatal charge,
There never yet on tragic stage,
Was seen so well a painted rage
As Oswald's show'd! With loud alarm
He call'd his garrison to arm;
From tower to tower, from post to post,
He hurried as if all were lost;
Consign'd to dungeon and to chain
The good old Knight and all his train;
Warn'd each suspected Cavalier,
Within his limits, to appear
To-morrow, at the hour of noon,
In the high church of Egliston."—

X.

"Of Egliston!—Even now I pass'd,"
Said Bertram, "as the night closed fast;
Torches and cressets gleam'd around,
I heard the saw and hammer sound,
And I could mark they toil'd to raise
A scaffold, hung with sable baize, [play'd,
Which the grim headsman's scene dis-
Block, axe, and sawdust ready laid.
Some evil deed will there be done,
Unless Matilda wed his son;—
She loves him not—'tis shrewdly guess'd
That Redmond rules the damsel's breast.
This is a turn of Oswald's skill;
But I may meet, and foil him still!——
How cam'st thou to thy freedom?"—
"There
Lies mystery more dark and rare.
In midst of Wycliffe's well-feign'd rage,
A scroll was offer'd by a page,
Who told, a muffled horseman late
Had left it at the Castle-gate. [change,
He broke the seal—his cheek show'd
Sudden, portentous, wild, and strange;
The mimic passion of his eye
Was turn'd to actual agony;
His hand like summer sapling shook,
Terror and guilt were in his look.
Denzil he judged, in time of need,
Fit counsellor for evil deed;
And thus apart his counsel broke,
While with a ghastly smile he spoke:—

XI.

"'As in the pageants of the stage,
The dead awake in this wild age,
Mortham—whom all men deem'd decreed
In his own deadly snare to bleed,
Slain by a bravo, whom, o'er sea,
He train'd to aid in murdering me,—
Mortham has 'scaped!—the coward shot
The steed, but harm'd the rider not.'"
Here, with an execration fell,
Bertram leap'd up, and paced the cell:—
"Thine own grey head, or bosom dark,"
He mutter'd, "may be surer mark!"
Then sat, and sign'd to Edmund, pale
With terror, to resume his tale.
"Wycliffe went on:—'Mark with what
Of wilder'd reverie he writes:— [flights

THE LETTER.

"'Ruler of Mortham's destiny!
Though dead, thy victim lives to thee.
Once had he all that binds to life—
A lovely child, a lovelier wife; [own—
Wealth, fame, and friendship were his
Thou gav'st the word, and they are flown.
Mark how he pays thee:—To thy hand
He yields his honours and his land,
One boon premised;—Restore his child!
And, from his native land exiled,
Mortham no more returns to claim
His land, his honours, or his name;
Refuse him this, and from the slain
Thou shalt see Mortham rise again.'—

XII.

"This billet while the Baron read,
His faltering accents show'd his dread;
He press'd his forehead with his palm,
Then took a scornful tone and calm:
'Wild as the winds, as billows wild!
What wot I of his spouse or child?
Hither he brought a joyous dame,
Unknown her lineage or her name:
Her, in some frantic fit, he slew;
The nurse and child in fear withdrew.
Heaven be my witness! wist I where
To find this youth, my kinsman's heir,—
Unguerdon'd, I would give with joy
The father's arms to fold his boy,
And Mortham's lands and towers resign
To the just heirs of Mortham's line.'—
Thou know'st that scarcely e'en his fear
Suppresses Denzil's cynic sneer;—
'Then happy is thy vassal's part,'
He said, 'to ease his patron's heart!
In thine own jailer's watchful care
Lies Mortham's just and rightful heir:
Thy generous wish is fully won,—
Redmond O'Neale is Mortham's son.'—

XIII.

"Up starting with a frenzied look,
His clenched hand the Baron shook:
'Is Hell at work? or dost thou rave,
Or dar'st thou palter with me, slave?
Perchance thou wot'st not, Barnard's towers
Have racks, of strange and ghastly powers.'
Denzil, who well his safety knew,
Firmly rejoin'd, 'I tell thee true.

Thy racks could give thee but to know
The proofs, which I, untortured, show.—
It chanced upon a winter night,
When early snow made Stanmore white,
That very night, when first of all
Redmond O'Neale saw Rokeby-hall,
It was my goodly lot to gain
A reliquary and a chain,
Twisted and chased of massive gold.
—Demand not how the prize I hold?
It was not given, nor lent, nor sold.—
Gilt tablets to the chain were hung,
With letters in the Irish tongue.
I hid my spoil, for there was need
That I should leave the land with speed;
Nor then I deem'd it safe to bear
On mine own person gems so rare.
Small heed I of the tablets took,
But since have spell'd them by the book,
When some sojourn in Erin's land
Of their wild speech had given command.
But darkling was the sense; the phrase
And language those of other days,
Involved of purpose, as to foil
An interloper's prying toil.
The words, but not the sense, I knew,
Till fortune gave the guiding clew.

XIV.

"'Three days since, was that clew reveal'd,
In Thorsgill as I lay conceal'd,
And heard at full when Rokeby's Maid
Her uncle's history display'd;
And now I can interpret well
Each syllable the tablets tell.
Mark, then: Fair Edith was the joy
Of old O'Neale of Clandeboy;
But from her sire and country fled,
In secret Mortham's Lord to wed.
O'Neale, his first resentment o'er,
Despatched his son to Greta's shore,
Enjoining he should make him known
(Until his farther will were shown)
To Edith, but to her alone.
What of their ill-starr'd meeting fell,
Lord Wycliffe knows, and none so well.

XV.

"'O'Neale it was, who, in despair,
Robb'd Mortham of his infant heir,
He bred him in their nurture wild,
And call'd him murder'd Connel's child.
Soon died the nurse; the Clan believed
What from their Chieftain they received.
His purpose was, that ne'er again
The boy should cross the Irish main;
But, like his mountain sires, enjoy
The woods and wastes of Clandeboy.
Then on the land wild troubles came,
And stronger Chieftains urged a claim,
And wrested from the old man's hands
His native towers, his father's lands.
Unable then, amid the strife,
To guard young Redmond's rights or life,
Late and reluctant he restores
The infant to his native shores
With goodly gifts and letters stored,
With many a deep conjuring word,
To Mortham and to Rokeby's Lord.
Nought knew the clod of Irish earth,
Who was the guide, of Redmond's birth;
But deem'd his Chief's commands were laid
On both, by both to be obey'd.
How he was wounded by the way,
I need not, and I list not say.'—

XVI.

"'A wondrous tale! and, grant it true,
What,' Wycliffe answer'd, 'might I do?
Heaven knows, as willingly as now
I raise the bonnet from my brow,
Would I my kinsman's manors fair
Restore to Mortham, or his heir;
But Mortham is distraught—O'Neale
Has drawn for tyranny his steel,
Malignant to our rightful cause,
And train'd in Rome's delusive laws.
Hark thee apart!'—They whisper'd long,
Till Denzil's voice grew bold and strong:—
'My proofs! I never will,' he said,
'Show mortal man where they are laid.
Nor hope discovery to foreclose,
By giving me to feed the crows;
For I have mates at large, who know
Where I am wont such toys to stow.
Free me from peril and from band,
These tablets are at thy command;
Nor were it hard to form some train,
To wile old Mortham o'er the main.
Then, lunatic's nor papist's hand
Should wrest from thine the goodly land.'—
—'I like thy wit,' said Wycliffe, 'well;
But here in hostage shalt thou dwell.
Thy son, unless my purpose err,
May prove the trustier messenger.
A scroll to Mortham shall he bear
From me, and fetch these tokens rare.
Gold shalt thou have, and that good store,
And freedom, his commission o'er;
But if his faith should chance to fail,
The gibbet frees thee from the jail.'—

XVII.

"Mesh'd in the net himself had twined,
What subterfuge could Denzil find?
He told me, with reluctant sigh,
That hidden here the tokens lie;
Conjured my swift return and aid,
By all he scoff'd and disobey'd,
And look'd as if the noose were tied,
And I the priest who left his side.
This scroll for Mortham Wycliffe gave,
Whom I must seek by Greta's wave;

Or in the hut where chief he hides,
Where Thorsgill's forester resides.
(Thence chanced it, wandering in the glade,
That he descried our ambuscade.)
I was dismiss'd as evening fell,
And reach'd but now this rocky cell."—
"Give Oswald's letter."—Bertram read,
And tore it fiercely, shred by shred:—
"All lies and villainy! to blind
His noble kinsman's generous mind,
And train him on from day to day,
Till he can take his life away.—
And now, declare thy purpose, youth,
Nor dare to answer, save the truth;
If aught I mark of Denzil's art,
I'll tear the secret from thy heart!"

XVIII.

"It needs not. I renounce," he said,
"My tutor and his deadly trade.
Fix'd was my purpose to declare
To Mortham, Redmond is his heir;
To tell him in what risk he stands,
And yield these tokens to his hands.
Fix'd was my purpose to atone,
Far as I may, the evil done;
And fix'd it rests—if I survive
This night, and leave this cave alive."—
"And Denzil?"—"Let them ply the rack,
Even till his joints and sinews crack!
If Oswald tear him limb from limb,
What ruth can Denzil claim from him,
Whose thoughtless youth he led astray,
And damn'd to this unhallow'd way?
He school'd me, faith and vows were vain;
Now let my master reap his gain."—
"True," answer'd Bertram, "'tis his meed;
There's retribution in the deed.
But thou—thou art not for our course,
Hast fear, hast pity, hast remorse:
And he, with us the gale who braves,
Must heave such cargo to the waves,
Or lag with overloaded prore,
While barks unburden'd reach the shore."

XIX.

He paus'd, and, stretching him at length,
Seem'd to repose his bulky strength.
Communing with his secret mind,
As half he sat, and half reclined,
One ample hand his forehead press'd,
And one was dropp'd across his breast.
The shaggy eyebrows deeper came
Above his eyes of swarthy flame;
His lip of pride a while forbore
The haughty curve till then it wore;
The unalter'd fierceness of his look
A shade of darken'd sadness took,—
For dark and sad a presage press'd
Resistlessly on Bertram's breast,—
And when he spoke, his wonted tone,
So fierce, abrupt, and brief, was gone.
His voice was steady, low, and deep,
Like distant waves when breezes sleep;
And sorrow mix'd with Edmund's fear,
Its low unbroken depth to hear.

XX.

"Edmund, in thy sad tale I find
The woe that warp'd my patron's mind:
'Twould wake the fountains of the eye
In other men, but mine are dry.
Mortham must never see the fool
That sold himself base Wycliffe's tool;
Yet less from thirst of sordid gain,
Than to avenge supposed disdain.
Say, Bertram rues his fault;—a word,
Till now, from Bertram never heard:
Say, too, that Mortham's Lord he prays
To think but on their former days;
On Quariana's beach and rock,
On Cayo's bustling battle-shock,
On Darien's sands and deadly dew,
And on the dart Tlatzeca threw;—
Perchance my patron yet may hear
More that may grace his comrade's bier.
My soul hath felt a secret weight,
A warning of approaching fate:
A priest had said, 'Return, repent!'
As well to bid that rock be rent.
Firm as that flint I face mine end;
My heart may burst, but cannot bend.

XXI.

"The dawning of my youth, with awe
And prophecy, the Dalesmen saw;
For over Redesdale it came,
As bodeful as their beacon-flame.
Edmund, thy years were scarcely mine,
When, challenging the Clans of Tyne
To bring their best my brand to prove,
O'er Hexham's altar hung my glove:
But Tynedale, nor in tower nor town,
Held champion meet to take it down.
My noontide, India may declare;
Like her fierce sun, I fired the air!
Like him, to wood and cave bade fly
Her natives, from mine angry eye.
Panama's maids shall long look pale
When Risingham inspires the tale;
Chili's dark matrons long shall tame
The froward child with Bertram's name.
And now, my race of terror run,
Mine be the eve of tropic sun!
No pale gradations quench his ray,
No twilight dews his wrath allay;
With disk like battle-target red,
He rushes to his burning bed,
Dyes the wide wave with bloody light,
Then sinks at once—and all is night.—

XXII.

"Now to thy mission, Edmund. Fly,
Seek Mortham out, and bid him hie

To Richmond, where his troops are laid,
And lead his force to Redmond's aid.
Say, till he reaches Egliston,
A friend will watch to guard his son.
Now, fare-thee-well; for night draws on,
And I would rest me here alone."
Despite his ill-dissembled fear,
There swam in Edmund's eye a tear;
A tribute to the courage high,
Which stoop'd not in extremity,
But strove, irregularly great,
To triumph o'er approaching fate!
Bertram beheld the dewdrop start,
It almost touch'd his iron heart:—
"I did not think there lived," he said,
"One who would tear for Bertram shed."
He loosen'd then his baldric's hold,
A buckle broad of massive gold;—
"Of all the spoil that paid his pains,
But this with Risingham remains;
And this, dear Edmund, thou shalt take,
And wear it long for Bertram's sake.
Once more—to Mortham speed amain;
Farewell! and turn thee not again."

XXIII.

The night has yielded to the morn,
And far the hours of prime are worn.
Oswald, who, since the dawn of day,
Had cursed his messenger's delay,
Impatient question'd now his train,
"Was Denzil's son return'd again?"
It chanced there answer'd of the crew,
A menial, who young Edmund knew;
"No son of Denzil this,"—he said;
"A peasant boy from Winston glade,
For song and minstrelsy renown'd,
And knavish pranks, the hamlets round."—
"Not Denzil's son!—From Winston vale!—
Then it was false, that specious tale;
Or, worse—he hath despatch'd the youth
To show to Mortham's Lord its truth.
Fool that I was!—but 'tis too late;—
This is the very turn of fate!—
The tale, or true or false, relies
On Denzil's evidence!—He dies!—
Ho! Provost Marshal! instantly
Lead Denzil to the gallows-tree!
Allow him not a parting word;
Short be the shrift, and sure the cord!
Then let his gory head appal
Marauders from the Castle-wall.
Lead forth thy guard, that duty done,
With best despatch to Egliston.—
—Basil, tell Wilfrid he must straight
Attend me at the Castle-gate."—

XXIV.

"Alas!" the old domestic said,
And shook his venerable head,
"Alas, my Lord! full ill to-day
May my young master brook the way!
The leech has spoke with grave alarm,
Of unseen hurt, of secret harm,
Of sorrow lurking at the heart,
That mars and lets his healing art."—
"Tush, tell not me!—Romantic boys
Pine themselves sick for airy toys,
I will find cure for Wilfrid soon;
Bid him for Egliston be boune,
And quick!—I hear the dull death-drum
Tell Denzil's hour of fate is come."
He paused with scornful smile, and then
Resumed his train of thought agen.
"Now comes my fortune's crisis near!
Entreaty boots not—instant fear,
Nought else, can bend Matilda's pride,
Or win her to be Wilfrid's bride.
But when she sees the scaffold placed,
With axe and block and headsman graced,
And when she deems, that to deny
Dooms Redmond and her sire to die,
She must give way.—Then, were the line
Of Rokeby once combined with mine,
I gain the weather-gage of fate!
If Mortham come, he comes too late,
While I, allied thus and prepared,
Bid him defiance to his beard.—
—If she prove stubborn, shall I dare
To drop the axe?—Soft! pause we there.
Mortham still lives—yon youth may tell
His tale—and Fairfax loves him well;—
Else, wherefore should I now delay
To sweep this Redmond from my way?—
But she to piety perforce [horse!"
Must yield.—Without there! Sound to

XXV.

'Twas bustle in the court below,—
"Mount, and march forward!"—Forth they go;
Steeds neigh and trample all around,
Steel rings, spears glimmer, trumpets sound.—
Just then was sung his parting hymn;
And Denzil turn'd his eyeballs dim,
And scarcely conscious what he sees,
Follows the horsemen down the Tees;
And scarcely conscious what he hears,
The trumpets tingle in his ears. [now,
O'er the long bridge they're sweeping
The van is hid by greenwood bough;
But ere the rearward had passed o'er,
Guy Denzil heard and saw no more!
One stroke, upon the Castle bell,
To Oswald rung his dying knell.

XXVI.

O, for that pencil, erst profuse
Of chivalry's emblazon'd hues,
That traced of old, in Woodstock bower,
The pageant of the Leaf and Flower,

And bodied forth the tourney high,
Held for the hand of Emily!
Then might I paint the tumult broad,
That to the crowded abbey flow'd,
And pour'd, as with an ocean's sound,
Into the church's ample bound!
Then might I show each varying mien,
Exulting, woeful, or serene;
Indifference, with his idiot stare,
And Sympathy, with anxious air,
Paint the dejected Cavalier,
Doubtful, disarm'd, and sad of cheer;
And his proud foe, whose formal eye
Claim'd conquest now and mastery;
And the brute crowd, whose envious zeal
Huzzas each turn of Fortune's wheel,
And loudest shouts when lowest lie
Exalted worth and station high.
Yet what may such a wish avail?
'Tis mine to tell an onward tale,
Hurrying, as best I can, along,
The hearers and the hasty song;—
Like traveller when approaching home,
Who sees the shades of evening come,
And must not now his course delay,
Or choose the fair, but winding way;
Nay, scarcely may his pace suspend,
Where o'er his head the wildings bend,
To bless the breeze that cools his brow,
Or snatch a blossom from the bough.

XXVII.

The reverend pile lay wild and waste,
Profaned, dishonour'd, and defaced.
Through storied lattices no more
In soften'd light the sunbeams pour,
Gilding the Gothic sculpture rich
Of shrine, and monument, and niche.
The Civil fury of the time
Made sport of sacrilegious crime;
For dark Fanaticism rent
Altar, and screen, and ornament,
And peasant hands the tombs o'erthrew
Of Bowes, of Rokeby, and Fitz-Hugh.
And now was seen, unwonted sight,
In holy walls a scaffold dight!
Where once the priest, of grace divine,
Dealt to his flock the mystic sign;
There stood the block display'd, and there
The headsman grim his hatchet bare;
And for the word of Hope and Faith,
Resounded loud a doom of death.
Thrice the fierce trumpet's breath was heard,
And echo'd thrice the herald's word,
Dooming, for breach of martial laws,
And treason to the Commons' cause,
The Knight of Rokeby and O'Neale
To stoop their heads to block and steel.
The trumpets flourish'd high and shrill,
Then was a silence dead and still;
And silent prayers to heaven were cast,
And stifled sobs were bursting fast,
Till from the crowd begun to rise
Murmurs of sorrow or surprise,
And from the distant aisles there came
Deep-mutter'd threats, with Wycliffe's name.

XXVIII.

But Oswald, guarded by his band,
Powerful in evil, waved his hand,
And bade Sedition's voice be dead,
On peril of the murmurer's head. [Knight,
Then first his glance sought Rokeby's
Who gazed on the tremendous sight,
As calm as if he came a guest
To kindred Baron's feudal feast,
As calm as if that trumpet-call
Were summons to the banner'd hall;
Firm in his loyalty he stood,
And prompt to seal it with his blood.
With downcast look drew Oswald nigh,—
He durst not cope with Rokeby's eye!—
And said, with low and faltering breath,
"Thou know'st the terms of life and death." [smiled;
The Knight then turn'd, and sternly
"The maiden is mine only child,
Yet shall my blessing leave her head,
If with a traitor's son she wed."
Then Redmond spoke: "The life of one
Might thy malignity atone,
On me be flung a double guilt!
Spare Rokeby's blood, let mine be spilt!"
Wycliffe had listen'd to his suit,
But dread prevail'd, and he was mute.

XXIX.

And now he pours his choice of fear
In secret on Matilda's ear:
"An union form'd with me and mine,
Ensures the faith of Rokeby's line.
Consent, and all this dread array,
Like morning dream, shall pass away;
Refuse, and, by my duty press'd,
I give the word—thou know'st the rest."
Matilda, still and motionless,
With terror heard the dread address,
Pale as the sheeted maid who dies
To hopeless love a sacrifice;
Then wrung her hands in agony,
And round her cast bewilder'd eye—
Now on the scaffold glanced, and now
On Wycliffe's unrelenting brow.
She veil'd her face, and, with a voice
Scarce audible,—"I make my choice!
Spare but their lives!—for aught beside,
Let Wilfrid's doom my fate decide.
He once was generous!"—As she spoke,
Dark Wycliffe's joy in triumph broke:—
"Wilfrid, where loiter'd ye so late?
Why upon Basil rest thy weight?—

Art spell-bound by enchanter's wand?—
Kneel, kneel, and take her yielded hand;
Thank her with raptures, simple boy!
Should tears and trembling speak thy joy?"—
"O hush, my sire! To prayer and tear
Of mine thou hast refused thine ear;
But now the awful hour draws on,
When truth must speak in loftier tone."

XXX.

He took Matilda's hand:—"Dear maid,
Couldst thou so injure me," he said,
"Of thy poor friend so basely deem,
As blend with him this barbarous scheme?
Alas! my efforts, made in vain,
Might well have saved this added pain.
But now, bear witness, earth and heaven,
That ne'er was hope to mortal given,
So twisted with the strings of life,
As this—to call Matilda wife!
I bid it now for ever part,
And with the effort bursts my heart."
His feeble frame was worn so low,
With wounds, with watching, and with woe,
That nature could no more sustain
The agony of mental pain.
He kneel'd—his lip her hand had press'd,—
Just then he felt the stern arrest.
Lower and lower sunk his head,—
They raised him,—but the life was fled!
Then, first alarm'd, his sire and train
Tried every aid, but tried in vain.
The soul, too soft its ills to bear,
Had left our mortal hemisphere,
And sought in better world the meed,
To blameless life by Heaven decreed.

XXXI.

The wretched sire beheld, aghast,
With Wilfrid all his projects past;—
All turn'd and centred on his son,
On Wilfrid all—and he was gone.
"And I am childless now," he said;
"Childless, through that relentless maid!
A lifetime's arts, in vain essay'd,
Are bursting on their artist's head!—
Here lies my Wilfrid dead—and there
Comes hated Mortham for his heir,
Eager to knit in happy band
With Rokeby's heiress Redmond's hand.
And shall their triumph soar o'er all
The schemes deep-laid to work their fall?
No!—deeds which prudence might not
Appal not vengeance and despair. [dare,
The murd'ress weeps upon his bier—
I'll change to real that feigned tear!
They all shall share destruction's shock;—
Ho! lead the captives to the block!"
But ill his Provost could divine
His feelings, and forbore the sign.

"Slave! to the block!—or I, or they,
Shall face the judgment-seat this day!"

XXXII.

The outmost crowd have heard a sound,
Like horse's hoof on harden'd ground;
Nearer it came, and yet more near,—
The very death's-men paused to hear.
'Tis in the churchyard now—the tread
Hath waked the dwelling of the dead!
Fresh sod, and old sepulchral stone,
Return the tramp in varied tone.
All eyes upon the gateway hung, [sprung
When through the Gothic arch there
A horseman arm'd, at headlong speed—
Sable his cloak, his plume, his steed.
Fire from the flinty floor was spurn'd,
The vaults unwonted clang return'd!—
One instant's glance around he threw,
From saddle-bow his pistol drew.
Grimly determined was his look!
His charger with the spurs he strook—
All scatter'd backward as he came,
For all knew Bertram Risingham!
Three bounds that noble courser gave;
The first has reach'd the central nave,
The second clear'd the chancel wide,
The third—he was at Wycliffe's side.
Full levell'd at the Baron's head,
Rung the report—the bullet sped—
And to his long account, and last,
Without a groan dark Oswald past!
All was so quick, that it might seem
A flash of lightning, or a dream.

XXXIII.

While yet the smoke the deed conceals,
Bertram his ready charger wheels;
But flounder'd on the pavement floor
The steed, and down the rider bore,
And, bursting in the headlong sway,
The faithless saddle-girths gave way.
'Twas while he toil'd him to be freed,
And with the rein to raise the steed,
That from amazement's iron trance
All Wycliffe's soldiers waked at once.
Sword, halbert, musket-butt, their blows
Hail'd upon Bertram as he rose;
A score of pikes, with each a wound,
Bore down and pinn'd him to the ground;
But still his struggling force he rears,
'Gainst hacking brands and stabbing spears;
Thrice from assailants shook him free,
Once gain'd his feet, and twice his knee.
By tenfold odds oppress'd at length,
Despite his struggles and his strength,
He took a hundred mortal wounds,
As mute as fox 'mongst mangling hounds;
And when he died, his parting groan
Had more of laughter than of moan!

—They gazed, as when a lion dies,
And hunters scarcely trust their eyes,
But bend their weapons on the slain,
Lest the grim king should rouse again!
Then blow and insult some renew'd,
And from the trunk the head had hew'd,
But Basil's voice the deed forbade;
A mantle o'er the corpse he laid:—
"Fell as he was in act and mind,
He left no bolder heart behind:
Then give him, for a soldier meet,
A soldier's cloak for winding-sheet."

XXXIV.

No more of death and dying pang,
No more of trump and bugle-clang,
Though through the sounding woods there come
Banner and bugle, trump and drum.
Arm'd with such powers as well had freed
Young Redmond at his utmost need,
And back'd with such a band of horse,
As might less ample powers enforce;
Possess'd of every proof and sign
That gave an heir to Mortham's line,
And yielded to a father's arms
An image of his Edith's charms,—
Mortham is come, to hear and see
Of this strange morn the history.
What saw he?—not the church's floor,
Cumber'd with dead and stain'd with gore;
What heard he?—not the clamorous crowd,
That shout their gratulations loud:
Redmond he saw and heard alone,
Clasp'd him, and sobb'd—"My son, my son!"—

XXXV.

This chanced upon a summer morn,
When yellow waved the heavy corn:
But when brown August o'er the land
Call'd forth the reaper's busy band,
A gladsome sight the sylvan road
From Egliston to Mortham show'd.
A while the hardy rustic leaves
The task to bind and pile the sheaves;
And maids their sickles fling aside,
To gaze on bridegroom and on bride;
And childhood's wondering group draw near,
And from the gleaner's hands the ear
Drops, while she folds them for a prayer
And blessing on the lovely pair.
'Twas then the Maid of Rokeby gave
Her plighted troth to Redmond brave;
And Teesdale can remember yet
How Fate to Virtue paid her debt,
And, for their troubles, bade them prove
A lengthen'd life of peace and love.

Time and Tide had thus their sway,
Yielding, like an April day,
Smiling noon for sullen morrow,
Years of joy for hours of sorrow!

THE

LORD OF THE ISLES.

IN SIX CANTOS.

ADVERTISEMENT TO THE FIRST EDITION.

The scene of this poem lies, at first, in the Castle of Artornish, on the coast of Argyleshire; and, afterwards, in the Islands of Skye and Arran, and upon the coast of Ayrshire. Finally, it is laid near Stirling. The story opens in the spring of the year 1307, when Bruce, who had been driven out of Scotland by the English, and the Barons who adhered to that foreign interest, returned from the Island of Rachrin, on the coast of Ireland, again to assert his claims to the Scottish crown. Many of the personages and incidents introduced are of historical celebrity. The authorities used are chiefly those of the venerable Lord Hailes, as well entitled to be called the restorer of Scottish history, as Bruce the restorer of Scottish monarchy; and of Archdeacon Barbour, a correct edition of whose Metrical History of Robert Bruce will soon, I trust, appear under the care of my learned friend, the Rev. Dr. Jamieson.

ABBOTSFORD, 10*th December*, 1814.

INTRODUCTION TO EDITION 1830.

I COULD hardly have chosen a subject more popular in Scotland than anything connected with the Bruce's history, unless I had attempted that of Wallace. But I am decidedly of opinion, that a popular, or what is called a *taking* title, though well qualified to ensure the publishers against loss, and clear their shelves of the original impression, is rather apt to be hazardous than otherwise to the reputation of the author. He who attempts a subject of distinguished popularity, has not the privilege of awakening the enthusiasm of his audience; on the contrary, it is already awakened, and glows, it may be, more ardently than that of the author himself. In this case, the warmth of the author is inferior to that of the party whom he addresses, who has, therefore, little chance of being, in Bayes's phrase, "elevated and surprised" by what he has thought of with more enthusiasm than the writer. The sense of this risk, joined to the consciousness of striving against wind and tide, made the task of composing the proposed Poem somewhat heavy and hopeless; but, like the prize-fighter in "As You Like It," I was to wrestle for my reputation, and not neglect any advantage. In a most agreeable pleasure-voyage, which I have tried to commemorate in the Introduction to the new edition of the "Pirate," I visited, in social and friendly company, the coasts and islands of Scotland, and made myself acquainted with the localities of which I meant to treat. But this voyage, which was in every other effect so delightful, was in its conclusion saddened by one of those strokes of fate which so often mingle themselves with our pleasures. The accomplished and excellent person who had recommended to me the subject for "The Lay of the Last Minstrel," and to whom I proposed to inscribe what I already suspected might be the close of my poetical labours, was unexpectedly removed from the world, which she seemed only to have visited for purposes of kindness and benevolence. It is needless to say how the author's feelings, or the composition of his trifling work, were affected by a circumstance which occasioned so many tears and so much sorrow. True it is, that "The Lord of the Isles" was concluded, unwillingly and in haste, under the painful feeling of one who has a task which must be finished, rather than with the ardour of one who endeavours to perform that task well. Although the Poem cannot be said to have made a favourable impression on the public, the sale of fifteen thousand copies enabled the author to retreat from the field with the honours of war.

In the meantime, what was necessarily to be considered as a failure, was much reconciled to my feeling by the success attending my attempt in another species of composition. "Waverley" had, under strict incognito, taken its flight from the press, just before I set out upon the voyage already mentioned; it had now made its way to popularity, and the success of that work, and

the volumes which followed, was sufficient to have satisfied a greater appetite for applause than I have at any time possessed.†

I may as well add in this place, that, being much urged by my intimate friend, now unhappily no more, William Erskine (a Scottish judge, by the title of Lord Kinnedder), I agreed to write the little romantic tale called the "Bridal of Triermain;" but it was on the condition that he should make no serious effort to disown the composition, if report should lay it at his door. As he was more than suspected of a taste for poetry, and as I took care, in several places, to mix something which might resemble (as far as was in my power) my friend's feeling and manner, the train easily caught, and two large editions were sold. A third being called for, Lord Kinnedder became unwilling to aid any longer a deception which was going further than he expected or desired, and the real author's name was given. Upon another occasion, I sent up another of these trifles, which, like schoolboys' kites, served to show how the wind of popular taste was setting. The manner was supposed to be that of a rude minstrel or Scald, in opposition to the "Bridal of Triermain," which was designed to belong rather to the Italian school.

This new fugitive piece was called "Harold the Dauntless:" and I am still astonished at my having committed the gross error of selecting the very name which Lord Byron had made so famous. It encountered rather an odd fate. My ingenious friend, Mr. James Hogg, had published, about the same time, a work called the "Poetic Mirror," containing imitations of the principal living poets. There was in it a very good imitation of my own style, which bore such a resemblance to "Harold the Dauntless," that there was no discovering the original from the imitation; and I believe that many who took the trouble of thinking upon the subject, were rather of opinion that my ingenious friend was the true, and not the fictitious Simon Pure. Since this period, which was in the year 1817, the author has not been an intruder on the public by any poetical work of importance.

W. S.

ABBOTSFORD, *April*, 1830.

THE LORD OF THE ISLES.

CANTO FIRST.

AUTUMN departs—but still his mantle's fold [ville;
Rests on the groves of noble Somer-
Beneath a shroud of russet dropp'd with gold,
Tweed and his tributaries mingle still;
Hoarser the wind, and deeper sounds the rill, [swell,
Yet lingering notes of sylvan music
The deep-toned cushat, and the red-breast shrill; [tell
And yet some tints of summer splendour
When the broad sun sinks down on Ettrick's western fell.

Autumn departs—from Gala's fields no more [to cheer;
Come rural sounds, our kindred banks
Blent with the stream, and gale that wafts it o'er, [hear.
No more the distant reaper's mirth we
The last blithe shout hath died upon our ear, [clanging wain,
And harvest-home hath hush'd the
On the waste hill no forms of life appear,
Save where, sad laggard of the autumnal train, [of scatter'd grain.
Some age-struck wanderer gleans few ears

Deem'st thou these saddened scenes have pleasure still,
Lov'st thou through Autumn's fading realms to stray; [hill,
To see the heath-flower wither'd on the
To listen to the wood's expiring lay,
To note the red leaf shivering on the spray, [tain stain,
To mark the last bright tints the moun-
On the waste fields to trace the gleaner's way,
And moralise on mortal joy and pain?—
O! if such scenes thou lovest, scorn not the minstrel strain.

No! do not scorn, although its hoarser note [can vie,
Scarce with the cushat's homely song
Though faint its beauties as the tints remote [evening sky,
That gleam through mist in autumn's
And few as leaves that tremble, sear and dry, [wound;
When wild November hath his bugle
Nor mock my toil—a lonely gleaner I,
Through fields time-wasted, on sad inquest bound,
Where happier bards of yore have richer harvest found.

† The first edition of Waverley appeared in July, 1814.

So shalt thou list, and haply not unmoved,
To a wild tale of Albyn's warrior day;
In distant lands, by the rough West reproved,
Still live some relics of the ancient lay.
For, when on Coolin's hills the lights decay,
With such the Seer of Skye the eve beguiles;
'Tis known amid the pathless wastes of Reay,
In Harries known, and in Iona's piles,
Where rest from mortal coil the Mighty of the Isles.

I.

"WAKE, Maid of Lorn!" the Minstrels sung.—
Thy rugged halls, Artornish! rung,*
And the dark seas, thy towers that lave,
Heaved on the beach a softer wave,
As, 'mid the tuneful choir to keep
The diapason of the Deep.
Lull'd were the winds on Inninmore,
And green Loch-Alline's woodland shore,
As if wild woods and waves had pleasure
In listing to the lovely measure.
And ne'er to symphony more sweet
Gave mountain echoes answer meet,
Since, met from mainland and from isle,
Ross, Arran, Islay, and Argyle,
Each minstrel's tributary lay
Paid homage to the festal day.
Dull and dishonour'd were the bard,
Worthless of guerdon and regard,
Deaf to the hope of minstrel fame,
Or lady's smiles, his noblest aim,
Who on that morn's resistless call
Were silent in Artornish hall.

II.

"Wake, Maid of Lorn!"—'twas thus they sung,
And yet more proud the descant rung,
"Wake, Maid of Lorn! high right is ours,
To charm dull sleep from Beauty's bowers;
Earth, Ocean, Air, have nought so shy
But owns the power of minstrelsy.
In Lettermore the timid deer
Will pause, the harp's wild chime to hear;
Rude Heiskar's seal, through surges dark,
Will long pursue the minstrel's bark;*
To list his notes, the eagle proud
Will poise him on Ben-Cailliach's cloud;
Then let not Maiden's ear disdain
The summons of the minstrel train,
But, while our harps wild music make,
Edith of Lorn, awake, awake!

III.

"O wake, while Dawn, with dewy shine,
Wakes Nature's charms to vie with thine!
She bids the mottled thrush rejoice
To mate thy melody of voice;
The dew that on the violet lies
Mocks the dark lustre of thine eyes;
But, Edith, wake, and all we see
Of sweet and fair shall yield to thee!"—
"She comes not yet," grey Ferrand cried;
"Brethren, let softer spell be tried,
Those notes prolonged, that soothing theme,
Which best may mix with Beauty's dream,
And whisper, with their silvery tone,
The hope she loves, yet fears to own."
He spoke, and on the harp-strings died
The strains of flattery and of pride;
More soft, more low, more tender fell
The lay of love he bade them tell.

IV.

"Wake, Maid of Lorn! the moments fly,
Which yet that maiden-name allow;
Wake, Maiden, wake! the hour is nigh,
When Love shall claim a plighted vow.
By Fear, thy bosom's fluttering guest,
By Hope, that soon shall fears remove,
We bid thee break the bonds of rest,
And wake thee at the call of Love!

"Wake, Edith, wake! in yonder bay
Lies many a galley gaily mann'd,
We hear the merry pibrochs play,
We see the streamers' silken band,
What Chieftain's praise these pibrochs swell,
What crest is on these banners wove,
The harp, the minstrel, dare not tell—
The riddle must be read by Love."

V.

Retired her maiden train among,
Edith of Lorn received the song,
But tamed the minstrel's pride had been
That had her cold demeanour seen;
For not upon her cheek awoke
The glow of pride when Flattery spoke,
Nor could their tenderest numbers bring
One sigh responsive to the string.
As vainly had her maidens vied
In skill to deck the princely bride.
Her locks, in dark-brown length array'd,
Cathleen of Ulne, 'twas thine to braid;
Young Eva with meet reverence drew
On the light foot the silken shoe,
While on the ankle's slender round
Those strings of pearl fair Bertha wound,
That, bleach'd Lochryan's depths within,
Seem'd dusky still on Edith's skin.
But Einion, of experience old,
Had weightiest task—the mantle's fold

* An asterisk in these pages signifies that a note upon the passage is to be found at the end of the volume.

In many an artful plait she tied,
To show the form it seem'd to hide,
Till on the floor descending roll'd
Its waves of crimson blent with gold.

VI.

O! lives there now so cold a maid,*
Who thus in beauty's pomp array'd,
In beauty's proudest pitch of power,
And conquest won—the bridal hour—
With every charm that wins the heart,
By Nature given, enhanced by Art,
Could yet the fair reflection view,
In the bright mirror pictured true,
And not one dimple on her cheek
A tell-tale consciousness bespeak?—
Lives still such maid?—Fair damsels, say,
For further vouches not my lay,
Save that such lived in Britain's isle,
When Lorn's bright Edith scorn'd to smile.

VII.

But Morag, to whose fostering care
Proud Lorn had given his daughter fair,
Morag, who saw a mother's aid
By all a daughter's love repaid
(Strict was that bond—most kind of all—
Inviolate in Highland hall)—
Grey Morag sate a space apart,
In Edith's eyes to read her heart.
In vain the attendants' fond appeal
To Morag's skill, to Morag's zeal;
She mark'd her child receive their care,
Cold as the image sculptured fair
(Form of some sainted patroness),
Which cloister'd maids combine to dress;
She mark'd—and knew her nursling's
In the vain pomp took little part. [heart
Wistful a while she gazed—then press'd
The maiden to her anxious breast
In finish'd loveliness—and led
To where a turret's airy head,
Slender and steep, and battled round,
O'erlook'd, dark Mull! thy mighty Sound,*
Where thwarting tides, with mingled roar,
Part thy swarth hills from Morven's shore.

VIII.

"Daughter," she said, "these seas behold,
Round twice a hundred islands roll'd,
From Hirt, that hears their northern roar,
To the green Islay's fertile shore;
Or mainland turn, where many a tower
Owns thy bold brother's feudal power,
Each on its own dark cape reclined,
And listening to its own wild wind,
From where Mingarry, sternly placed,
O'erawes the woodland and the waste,
To where Dunstaffnage hears the raging
Of Connal with its rocks engaging.
Think'st thou, amid this ample round,
A single brow but thine has frown'd,
To sadden this auspicious morn,
That bids the daughter of high Lorn
Impledge her spousal faith to wed
The heir of mighty Somerled?*
Ronald, from many a hero sprung,
The fair, the valiant, and the young,
LORD OF THE ISLES, whose lofty name*
A thousand bards have given to fame,
The mate of monarchs, and allied
On equal terms with England's pride.—
From chieftain's tower to bondsman's cot,
Who hears the tale, and triumphs not?
The damsel dons her best attire,
The shepherd lights his beltane fire,
Joy! joy! each warder's horn hath sung,
Joy! joy! each matin bell hath rung;
The holy priest says grateful mass,
Loud shouts each hardy galla-glass,
No mountain den holds outcast boor,
Of heart so dull, of soul so poor,
But he hath flung his task aside,
And claim'd this morn for holy-tide;
Yet, empress of this joyful day,
Edith is sad while all are gay."—

IX.

Proud Edith's soul came to her eye,
Resentment check'd the struggling sigh.
Her hurrying hand indignant dried
The burning tears of injured pride—
"Morag, forbear! or lend thy praise
To swell yon hireling harpers' lays;
Make to yon maids thy boast of power,
That they may waste a wondering hour,
Telling of banners proudly borne,
Of pealing bell and bugle horn,
Or, theme more dear, of robes of price,
Crownlets and gauds of rare device.
But thou, experienced as thou art,
Think'st thou with these to cheat the heart,
That, bound in strong affection's chain,
Looks for return, and looks in vain?
No! sum thine Edith's wretched lot
In these brief words—He loves her not!

X.

"Debate it not—too long I strove
To call his cold observance love,
All blinded by the league that styled
Edith of Lorn,—while yet a child,
She tripp'd the heath by Morag's side—
The brave Lord Ronald's destined bride.
Ere yet I saw him, while afar
His broadsword blazed in Scotland's war,
Train'd to believe our fates the same,
My bosom throbb'd when Ronald's name
Came gracing Fame's heroic tale,
Like perfume on the summer gale.
What pilgrim sought our halls, nor told
Of Ronald's deeds in battle bold?
Who touch'd the harp to heroes' praise,
But his achievements swell'd the lays?

Even Morag—not a tale of fame
Was hers but closed with Ronald's name.
He came; and all that had been told
Of his high worth seem'd poor and cold,
Tame, lifeless, void of energy,
Unjust to Ronald and to me!

XI.

"Since then, what thought had Edith's heart
And gave not plighted love its part?—
And what requital? cold delay—
Excuse that shunn'd the spousal day.—
It dawns, and Ronald is not here!—
Hunts he Bentalla's nimble deer,
Or loiters he in secret dell
To bid some lighter love farewell,
And swear, that though he may not scorn
A daughter of the House of Lorn,*
Yet, when these formal rites are o'er,
Again they meet, to part no more?"

XII.

—"Hush, daughter, hush! thy doubts remove,
More nobly think of Ronald's love.
Look, where beneath the castle grey
His fleet unmoor from Aros bay!
See'st not each galley's topmast bend,
As on the yards the sails ascend?
Hiding the dark-blue land, they rise
Like the white clouds on April skies;
The shouting vassals man the oars,
Behind them sink Mull's mountain shores,
Onward their merry course they keep,
Through whistling breeze and foaming deep.
And mark the headmost, seaward cast,
Stoop to the freshening gale her mast,
As if she veil'd its banner'd pride,
To greet afar her Prince's bride!
Thy Ronald comes, and while in speed
His galley mates the flying steed,
He chides her sloth!"—Fair Edith sigh'd,
Blush'd, sadly smiled, and thus replied:—

XIII.

"Sweet thought, but vain!—No, Morag!
Type of his course, yon lonely bark, [mark,
That oft hath shifted helm and sail,
To win its way against the gale.
Since peep of morn, my vacant eyes
Have view'd by fits the course she tries;
Now, though the darkening scud comes on,
And dawn's fair promises be gone,
And though the weary crew may see
Our sheltering haven on their lee,
Still closer to the rising wind
They strive her shivering sail to bind,
Still nearer to the shelves' dread verge
At every tack her course they urge,
As if they fear'd Artornish more
Than adverse winds and breakers' roar."

XIV.

Sooth spoke the maid.—Amid the tide
The skiff she mark'd lay tossing sore,
And shifted oft her stooping side,
In weary tack from shore to shore.
Yet on her destined course no more
She gain'd, of forward way,
Than what a minstrel may compare
To the poor meed which peasants share,
Who toil the livelong day;
And such the risk her pilot braves,
That oft, before she wore,
Her boltsprit kiss'd the broken waves,
Where in white foam the ocean raves
Upon the shelving shore.
Yet, to their destined purpose true,
Undaunted toil'd her hardy crew,
Nor look'd where shelter lay,
Nor for Artornish Castle drew,
Nor steer'd for Aros bay.

XV.

Thus while they strove with wind and seas,
Borne onward by the willing breeze,
Lord Ronald's fleet swept by,
Streamer'd with silk, and trick'd with gold,
Mann'd with the noble and the bold
Of island chivalry.
Around their prows the ocean roars,
And chafes beneath their thousand oars,
Yet bears them on their way:
So chafes the war-horse in his might,
That fieldward bears some valiant knight,
Champs, till both boss and bit are white,
But, foaming, must obey.
On each gay deck they might behold
Lances of steel and crests of gold,
And hauberks with their burnish'd fold,
That shimmer'd fair and free;
And each proud galley, as she pass'd,
To the wild cadence of the blast
Give wilder minstrelsy.
Full many a shrill triumphant note
Saline and Scallastle bade float
Their misty shores around;
And Morven's echoes answer'd well,
And Duart heard the distant swell
Come down the darksome Sound.

XVI.

So bore they on with mirth and pride,
And if that labouring bark they spied,
'Twas with such idle eye
As nobles cast on lowly boor,
When, toiling in his task obscure,
They pass him careless by.
Let them sweep on with heedless eyes!
But, had they known what mighty prize
In that frail vessel lay,
The famish'd wolf, that prowls the wold,
Had scatheless pass'd the unguarded fold,
Ere, drifting by these galleys bold,

Unchallenged were her way!
And thou, Lord Ronald, sweep thou on,
With mirth, and pride, and minstrel tone!
But hadst thou known who sail'd so nigh,
Far other glance were in thine eye!
Far other flush were on thy brow,
That, shaded by the bonnet, now
Assumes but ill the blithesome cheer
Of bridegroom when the bride is near!

XVII.

Yes, sweep they on!—We will not leave,
For them that triumph, those who grieve.
With that armada gay
Be laughter loud and jocund shout,
And bards to cheer the wassail rout,
With tale, romance, and lay;
And of wild mirth each clamorous art,
Which, if it cannot cheer the heart,
May stupefy and stun its smart,
For one loud busy day.
Yes, sweep they on!—But with that skiff
Abides the minstrel tale,
Where there was dread of surge and cliff,
Labour that strain'd each sinew stiff,
And one sad Maiden's wail.

XVIII.

All day with fruitless strife they toil'd,
With eve the ebbing currents boil'd
More fierce from strait and lake;
And midway through the channel met
Conflicting tides that foam and fret,
And high their mingled billows jet,
As spears, that, in the battle set,
Spring upward as they break.
Then, too, the lights of eve were past,
And louder sung the western blast
On rocks of Inninmore;
Rent was the sail, and strain'd the mast,
And many a leak was gaping fast,
And the pale steersman stood aghast,
And gave the conflict o'er.

XIX.

'Twas then that One, whose lofty look
Nor labour dull'd nor terror shook,
Thus to the Leader spoke:—
"Brother, how hop'st thou to abide
The fury of this wilder'd tide,
Or how avoid the rock's rude side,
Until the day has broke?
Didst thou not mark the vessel reel,
With quivering planks, and groaning keel,
At the last billow's shock?
Yet how of better counsel tell,
Though here thou see'st poor Isabel
Half dead with want and fear;
For look on sea, or look on land,
Or yon dark sky—on every hand
Despair and death are near.
For her alone I grieve,—on me
Danger sits light, by land and sea,
I follow where thou wilt;
Either to bide the tempest's lour,
Or wend to yon unfriendly tower,
Or rush amid their naval power,
With war-cry wake their wassail-hour,
And die with hand on hilt."—

XX.

That elder Leader's calm reply
In steady voice was given,—
"In man's most dark extremity
Oft succour dawns from Heaven.
Edward, trim thou the shatter'd sail,
The helm be mine, and down the gale
Let our free course be driven;
So shall we 'scape the western bay,
The hostile fleet, the unequal fray,
So safely hold our vessel's way
Beneath the Castle wall;
For if a hope of safety rest,
'Tis on the sacred name of guest,
Who seeks for shelter, storm-distress'd,
Within a chieftain's hall.
If not—it best beseems our worth,
Our name, our right, our lofty birth,
By noble hands to fall."

XXI.

The helm, to his strong arm consign'd,
Gave the reef'd sail to meet the wind,
And on her alter'd way,
Fierce bounding, forward sprung the ship,
Like greyhound starting from the slip
To seize his flying prey.
Awaked before the rushing prow,
The mimic fires of ocean glow,
Those lightnings of the wave; *
Wild sparkles crest the broken tides,
And, flashing round, the vessel's sides
With elvish lustre lave,
While, far behind, their livid light
To the dark billows of the night
A gloomy splendour gave.
It seems as if old Ocean shakes
From his dark brow the lucid flakes
In envious pageantry,
To match the meteor-light that streaks
Grim Hecla's midnight sky.

XXII.

Nor lack'd they steadier light to keep
Their course upon the darken'd deep;—
Artornish, on her frowning steep
'Twixt cloud and ocean hung,
Glanced with a thousand lights of glee,
And landward far, and far to sea,
Her festal radiance flung.
By that blithe beacon-light they steer'd,
Whose lustre mingled well
With the pale beam that now appear'd,
As the cold moon her head uprear'd
Above the eastern fell.

XXIII.

Thus guided, on their course they bore,
Until they near'd the mainland shore,
When frequent on the hollow blast
Wild shouts of merriment were cast,
And wind and wave the sea-birds' cry
With wassail sounds in concert vie,
Like funeral shrieks with revelry,
Or like the battle-shout
By peasants heard from cliffs on high,
When Triumph, Rage, and Agony,
Madden the fight and rout.
Now nearer yet, through mist and storm
Dimly arose the Castle's form,
And deepen'd shadow made,
Far lengthen'd on the main below,
Where, dancing in reflected glow,
A hundred torches play'd,
Spangling the wave with lights as vain
As pleasures in this vale of pain,
That dazzle as they fade.

XXIV.

Beneath the Castle's sheltering lee,
They staid their course in quiet sea.
Hewn in the rock, a passage there
Sought the dark fortress by a stair,
So straight, so high, so steep,
With peasant's staff one valiant hand
Might well the dizzy pass have mann'd,
'Gainst hundreds arm'd with spear and brand,
And plunged them in the deep.
His bugle then the helmsman wound;
Loud answer'd every echo round,
From turret, rock, and bay;
The postern hinges crash and groan,
And soon the Warder's cresset shone
On those rude steps of slippery stone,
To light the upward way.
"Thrice welcome, holy Sire!" he said;
"Full long the spousal train have staid,
And, vex'd at thy delay,
Fear'd lest, amidst these wildering seas,
The darksome night and freshening breeze
Had driven thy bark astray."—

XXV.

"Warder," the younger stranger said,
"Thine erring guess some mirth had made
In mirthful hour; but nights like these,
When the rough winds wake western seas,
Brook not of glee. We crave some aid
And needful shelter for this maid
Until the break of day;
For, to ourselves, the deck's rude plank
Is easy as the mossy bank
That 's breath'd upon by May.
And for our storm-toss'd skiff we seek
Short shelter in this leeward creek,
Prompt when the dawn the east shall streak
Again to bear away."—
Answer'd the Warder,—"In what name
Assert ye hospitable claim?
Whence come, or whither bound?
Hath Erin seen your parting sails,
Or come ye on Norweyan gales?
And seek ye England's fertile vales,
Or Scotland's mountain ground?"—

XXVI.

"Warriors—for other title none
For some brief space we list to own,
Bound by a vow—warriors are we;
In strife by land, and storm by sea,
We have been known to fame;
And these brief words have import dear,
When sounded in a noble ear,
To harbour safe, and friendly cheer,
That gives us rightful claim.
Grant us the trivial boon we seek,
And we in other realms will speak
Fair of your courtesy;
Deny—and be your niggard Hold
Scorn'd by the noble and the bold,
Shunn'd by the pilgrim on the wold,
And wanderer on the lea!"—

XXVII.

"Bold stranger, no—'gainst claim like thine,
No bolt revolves by hand of mine,
Though urged in tone that more express'd
A monarch than a suppliant guest.
Be what ye will, Artornish Hall
On this glad eve is free to all.
Though ye had drawn a hostile sword
'Gainst our ally, great England's Lord,
Or mail upon your shoulders borne,
To battle with the Lord of Lorn,
Or, outlaw'd, dwelt by greenwood tree
With the fierce Knight of Ellerslie,†
Or aided even the murderous strife,
When Comyn fell beneath the knife
Of that fell homicide The Bruce,*
This night had been a term of truce.—
Ho, vassals! give these guests your care,
And show the narrow postern stair."

XXVIII.

To land these two bold brethren leapt
(The weary crew their vessel kept),
And, lighted by the torches' flare,
That seaward flung their smoky glare,
The younger knight that maiden bare
Half lifeless up the rock;
On his strong shoulder lean'd her head,
And down her long dark tresses shed,
As the wild vine, in tendrils spread,
Droops from the mountain oak.
Him follow'd close that elder Lord,
And in his hand a sheathèd sword,
Such as few arms could wield;

† Sir William Wallace.

But when he boun'd him to such task,
Well could it cleave the strongest casque,
And rend the surest shield.

XXIX.

The raised portcullis' arch they pass,
The wicket with its bars of brass,
The entrance long and low,
Flank'd at each turn by loop-holes strait,
Where bowmen might in ambush wait
(If force or fraud should burst the gate),
To gall an entering foe.
But every jealous post of ward
Was now defenceless and unbarr'd,
And all the passage free
To one low-brow'd and vaulted room,
Where squire and yeoman, page and groom,
Plied their loud revelry.

XXX.

And "Rest ye here," the Warder bade,
"Till to our Lord your suit is said.—
And, comrades, gaze not on the maid,
And on these men who ask our aid,
As if ye ne'er had seen
A damsel tired of midnight bark,
Or wanderers of a moulding stark,
And bearing martial mien."
But not for Eachin's reproof
Would page or vassal stand aloof,
But crowded on to stare,
As men of courtesy untaught,
Till fiery Edward roughly caught,
From one the foremost there,
His chequer'd plaid, and in its shroud,
To hide her from the vulgar crowd,
Involved his sister fair.
His brother, as the clansman bent
His sullen brow in discontent,
Made brief and stern excuse;—
"Vassal, were thine the cloak of pall
That decks thy lord in bridal hall,
'Twere honour'd by her use."

XXXI.

Proud was his tone, but calm; his eye
Had that compelling dignity,
His mien that bearing haught and high,
Which common spirits fear!
Needed nor word nor signal more,
Nod, wink, and laughter, all were o'er;
Upon each other back they bore,
And gazed like startled deer,
But now appear'd the Seneschal,
Commission'd by his lord to call
The strangers to the Baron's hall,
Where feasted fair and free
That Island Prince in nuptial tide,
With Edith there his lovely bride,
And her bold brother by her side,
And many a chief, the flower and pride
Of Western land and sea.

Here pause we, gentles, for a space;
And, if our tale hath won your grace,
Grant us brief patience, and again
We will renew the minstrel strain.

CANTO SECOND.

I.

FILL the bright goblet, spread the festive board!
Summon the gay, the noble, and the fair!
Through the loud hall, in joyous concert pour'd,
Let mirth and music sound the dirge of Care!
But ask thou not if Happiness be there,
If the loud laugh disguise convulsive throe,
Or if the brow the heart's true livery wear;
Lift not the festal mask!—enough to know,
No scene of mortal life but teems with mortal woe.

II.

With beakers' clang, with harpers' lay,
With all that olden time deem'd gay,
The Island Chieftain feasted high;
But there was in his troubled eye
A gloomy fire, and on his brow,
Now sudden flush'd, and faded now,
Emotions such as draw their birth
From deeper source than festal mirth.
By fits he paused, and harper's strain
And jester's tale went round in vain,
Or fell but on his idle ear
Like distant sounds which dreamers hear.
Then would he rouse him, and employ
Each art to aid the clamorous joy,
And call for pledge and lay,
And, for brief space, of all the crowd,
As he was loudest of the loud,
Seem gayest of the gay.

III.

Yet nought amiss the bridal throng
Mark'd in brief mirth, or musing long;
The vacant brow, the unlistening ear,
They gave to thoughts of raptures near,
And his fierce starts of sudden glee
Seem'd bursts of bridegroom's ecstasy.
Nor thus alone misjudged the crowd,
Since lofty Lorn, suspicious, proud,
And jealous of his honour'd line,
And that keen knight, De Argentine*
(From England sent on errand high,
The western league more firm to tie),
Both deem'd in Ronald's mood to find
A lover's transport-troubled mind.
But one sad heart, one tearful eye,
Pierced deeper through the mystery,
And watch'd, with agony and fear,
Her wayward bridegroom's varied cheer.

IV.

She watch'd—yet fear'd to meet his glance,
And he shunn'd hers;—till when by chance
They met, the point of foeman's lance
Had given a milder pang!
Beneath the intolerable smart [heart
He writhed—then sternly mann'd his
To play his hard but destined part,
And from the table sprang.
"Fill me the mighty cup!" he said,
"Erst own'd by royal Somerled:*
Fill it, till on the studded brim
In burning gold the bubbles swim,
And every gem of varied shine
Glow doubly bright in rosy wine!
To you, brave lord, and brother mine,
Of Lorn, this pledge I drink—
The Union of Our House with thine,
By this fair bridal-link!"—

V.

"Let it pass round!" quoth He of Lorn,
"And in good time—that winded horn
Must of the Abbot tell;
The laggard monk is come at last."
Lord Ronald heard the bugle-blast,
And on the floor at random cast,
The untasted goblet fell.
But when the Warder in his ear
Tells other news, his blither cheer
Returns like sun of May, [beams!—
When through a thunder-cloud it
Lord of two hundred isles, he seems
As glad of brief delay,
As some poor criminal might feel,
When, from the gibbet or the wheel,
Respited for a day.

VI.

"Brother of Lorn," with hurried voice
He said, "and you, fair lords, rejoice!
Here, to augment our glee,
Come wandering knights from travel far,
Well proved, they say, in strife of war,
And tempest on the sea.—
Ho! give them at your board such place
As best their presences may grace,
And bid them welcome free!"
With solemn step, and silver wand,
The Seneschal the presence scann'd
Of these strange guests; and well he knew
How to assign their rank its due;
For though the costly furs
That erst had deck'd their caps were torn,
And their gay robes were over-worn,
And soil'd their gilded spurs,
Yet such a high commanding grace
Was in their mien and in their face,
As suited best the princely dais,*
And royal canopy;
And there he marshall'd them their place,
First of that company.

VII.

Then lords and ladies spake aside,
And angry looks the error chide,
That gave to guests unnamed, unknown,
A place so near their Prince's throne;
But Owen Erraught said,
"For forty years a seneschal,
To marshal guests in bower and hall
Has been my honour'd trade.
Worship and birth to me are known,
By look, by bearing, and by tone,
Not by furr'd robe or broider'd zone;
And 'gainst an oaken bough
I'll gage my silver wand of state,
That these three strangers oft have sate
In higher place than now."—

VIII.

"I, too," the aged Ferrand said,
"Am qualified by minstrel trade
Of rank and place to tell;—
Mark'd ye the younger stranger's eye,
My mates, how quick, how keen, how high,
How fierce its flashes fell,
Glancing among the noble rout,
As if to seek the noblest out,
Because the owner might not brook
On any save his peers to look?
And yet it moves me more,
That steady, calm, majestic brow,
With which the elder chief e'en now
Scann'd the gay presence o'er,
Like being of superior kind,
In whose high-toned impartial mind
Degrees of mortal rank and state
Seem objects of indifferent weight.
The lady too—though, closely tied,
The mantle veil both face and eye,
Her motions' grace it could not hide,
Nor could her form's fair symmetry."

IX.

Suspicious doubt and lordly scorn
Lour'd on the haughty front of Lorn.
From underneath his brows of pride,
The stranger guests he sternly eyed,
And whisper'd closely what the ear
Of Argentine alone might hear;
Then question'd, high and brief,
If, in their voyage, aught they knew
Of the rebellious Scottish crew,
Who to Rath-Erin's shelter drew,
With Carrick's outlaw'd Chief?*
And if, their winter's exile o'er,
They harbour'd still by Ulster's shore,
Or launch'd their galleys on the main,
To vex their native land again?

* *Dais*—the great hall-table, elevated a step or two above the rest of the room.

X.

That younger stranger, fierce and high,
At once confronts the Chieftain's eye
With look of equal scorn;—
"Of rebels have we nought to show;
But if of Royal Bruce thou'dst know,
I warn thee he has sworn,
Ere thrice three days shall come and go,
His banner Scottish winds shall blow,
Despite each mean or mighty foe,
From England's every bill and bow,
To Allaster of Lorn."
Kindled the mountain Chieftain's ire,
But Ronald quench'd the rising fire;—
"Brother, it better suits the time
To chase the night with Ferrand's rhyme,
Than wake, 'midst mirth and wine, the jars
That flow from these unhappy wars."—
"Content," said Lorn; and spoke apart
With Ferrand, master of his art,
Then whisper'd Argentine,—
"The lay I named will carry smart
To these bold strangers' haughty heart,
If right this guess of mine."
He ceased, and it was silence all,
Until the minstrel waked the hall.

XI.

THE BROOCH OF LORN.*

"Whence the brooch of burning gold,
That clasps the Chieftain's mantle-fold,
Wrought and chased with rare device,
Studded fair with gems of price,
On the varied tartans beaming,
As, through night's pale rainbow gleaming,
Fainter now, now seen afar,
Fitful shines the northern star?

"Gem! ne'er wrought on Highland mountain,
Did the fairy of the fountain,
Or the mermaid of the wave,
Frame thee in some coral cave?
Did, in Iceland's darksome mine,
Dwarf's swart hands thy metal twine?
Or, mortal-moulded, com'st thou here,
From England's love, or France's fear?

XII.

SONG CONTINUED.

"No!—thy splendours nothing tell
Foreign art or fairy spell.
Moulded thou for monarch's use,
By the overweening Bruce,
When the royal robe he tied
O'er a heart of wrath and pride;
Thence in triumph wert thou torn,
By the victor hand of Lorn!

"When the gem was won and lost,
Widely was the war-cry toss'd!
Rung aloud Bendourish fell,
Answer'd Douchart's sounding dell,
Fled the deer from wild Teyndrum,
When the homicide, o'ercome,
Hardly 'scaped, with scathe and scorn,
Left the pledge with conquering Lorn!

XIII.

SONG CONCLUDED.

"Vain was then the Douglas' brand,
Vain the Campbell's vaunted hand,
Vain Kirkpatrick's bloody dirk,
Making sure of murder's work:*
Barendown fled fast away,
Fled the fiery De la Haye,*
When this brooch, triumphant borne,
Beam'd upon the breast of Lorn.

"Farthest fled its former lord,
Left his men to brand and cord,
Bloody brand of Highland steel,
English gibbet, axe, and wheel.
Let him fly from coast to coast,
Dogg'd by Comyn's vengeful ghost,
While his spoils, in triumph worn,
Long shall grace victorious Lorn!"

XIV.

As glares the tiger on his foes,
Hemm'd in by hunters, spears, and bows,
And, ere he bounds upon the ring,
Selects the object of his spring,—
Now on the Bard, now on his Lord,
So Edward glared and grasp'd his sword—
But stern his brother spoke,—"Be still.
What! art thou yet so wild of will,
After high deeds and sufferings long,
To chafe thee for a menial's song?—
Well hast thou framed, Old Man, thy strains,
To praise the hand that pays thy pains!
Yet something might thy song have told
Of Lorn's three vassals, true and bold,
Who rent their Lord from Bruce's hold,
As underneath his knee he lay,
And died to save him in the fray.
I've heard the Bruce's cloak and clasp
Was clench'd within their dying grasp,
What time a hundred foemen more
Rush'd in, and back the victor bore,
Long after Lorn had left the strife,
Full glad to 'scape with limb and life.—
Enough of this—And, Minstrel, hold,
As minstrel hire, this chain of gold,
For future lays a fair excuse,
To speak more nobly of the Bruce."—

XV.

"Now, by Columba's shrine, I swear,
And every saint that's buried there,
'Tis he himself!" Lorn sternly cries,
"And for my kinsman's death he dies."*
As loudly Ronald calls—"Forbear!
Not in my sight while brand I wear,

O'ermatched by odds, shall warrior fall,
Or blood of stranger stain my hall!
This ancient fortress of my race
Shall be misfortune's resting-place,
Shelter and shield of the distress'd,
No slaughter-house for shipwreck'd guest."—
"Talk not to me," fierce Lorn replied,
"Of odds or match!—when Comyn died,
Three daggers clash'd within his side!
Talk not to me of sheltering hall—
The Church of GOD saw Comyn fall!
On God's own altar stream'd his blood,
While o'er my prostrate kinsman stood
The ruthless murderer—e'en as now—
With armèd hand and scornful brow!—
Up, all who love me! blow on blow!
And lay the outlaw'd felons low!"

XVI.

Then up sprang many a mainland Lord,
Obedient to their Chieftain's word.
Barcaldine's arm is high in air,
And Kinloch-Alline's blade is bare,
Black Murthok's dirk has left its sheath,
And clench'd is Dermid's hand of death.
Their mutter'd threats of vengeance swell
Into a wild and warlike yell;
Onward they press with weapons high,
The affrighted females shriek and fly,
And, Scotland, then thy brightest ray
Had darken'd ere its noon of day,—
But every chief of birth and fame,
That from the Isles of Ocean came,
At Ronald's side that hour withstood
Fierce Lorn's relentless thirst for blood.

XVII.

Brave Torquil from Dunvegan high,
Lord of the misty hills of Skye,
Mac-Niel, wild Bara's ancient thane,
Duart, of bold Clan-Gillian's strain,
Fergus, of Canna's castled bay,
Mac-Duffith, Lord of Colonsay,
Soon as they saw the broadswords glance,
With ready weapons rose at once,
More prompt, that many an ancient feud,
Full oft suppress'd, full oft renew'd,
Glow'd 'twixt the chieftains of Argyle,
And many a lord of ocean's isle.
Wild was the scene—each sword was bare,
Back stream'd each chieftain's shaggy hair,
In gloomy opposition set,
Eyes, hands, and brandish'd weapons met;
Blue gleaming o'er the social board,
Flash'd to the torches many a sword;
And soon those bridal lights may shine
On purple blood for rosy wine.

XVIII.

While thus for blows and death prepared,
Each heart was up, each weapon bared,
Each foot advanced,—a surly pause
Still reverenced hospitable laws.
All menaced violence, but alike
Reluctant each the first to strike
(For aye accursed in minstrel line
Is he who brawls 'mid song and wine),
And, match'd in numbers and in might,
Doubtful and desperate seem'd the fight.
Thus threat and murmur died away,
Till on the crowded hall there lay
Such silence, as the deadly still,
Ere bursts the thunder on the hill.
With blade advanced, each Chieftain bold
Show'd like the Sworder's form of old,
As wanting still the torch of life,
To wake the marble into strife.

XIX.

That awful pause the stranger maid,
And Edith, seized to pray for aid.
As to De Argentine she clung,
Away her veil the stranger flung,
And, lovely 'mid her wild despair,
Fast stream'd her eyes, wide flow'd her hair:—
"O thou, of knighthood once the flower,
Sure refuge in distressful hour,
Thou, who in Judah well hast fought
For our dear faith, and oft has sought
Renown in knightly exercise,
When this poor hand has dealt the prize,
Say, can thy soul of honour brook
On the unequal strife to look,
When, butcher'd thus in peaceful hall,
Those once thy friends, my brethren, fall!"
To Argentine she turn'd her word,
But her eye sought the Island Lord.
A flush like evening's setting flame
Glow'd on his cheek; his hardy frame,
As with a brief convulsion, shook:
With hurried voice and eager look,—
"Fear not," he said, "my Isabel!
What said I—Edith!—all is well—
Nay, fear not—I will well provide
The safety of my lovely bride—
My bride?" but there the accents clung
In tremor to his faltering tongue.

XX.

Now rose De Argentine, to claim
The prisoners in his sovereign's name,
To England's crown, who, vassals sworn,
'Gainst their liege lord had weapon borne—
(Such speech, I ween, was but to hide
His care their safety to provide;
For knight more true in thought and deed
Than Argentine, ne'er spurr'd a steed)—
And Ronald, who his meaning guess'd,
Seem'd half to sanction the request.
This purpose fiery Torquil broke:—
"Somewhat we've heard of England's yoke,"

He said, "and, in our islands, Fame
Hath whisper'd of a lawful claim,
That calls the Bruce fair Scotland's Lord,
Though dispossess'd by foreign sword.
This craves reflection—but though right
And just the charge of England's Knight,
Let England's crown her rebels seize
Where she has power;—in towers like these,
'Midst Scottish Chieftains summon'd here
To bridal mirth and bridal cheer,
Be sure, with no consent of mine,
Shall either Lorn or Argentine
With chains or violence, in our sight,
Oppress a brave and banish'd Knight."

XXI.

Then waked the wild debate again,
With brawling threat and clamour vain.
Vassals and menials, thronging in,
Lent their brute rage to swell the din;
When, far and wide, a bugle-clang
From the dark ocean upward rang.
"The Abbot comes!" they cry at once,
"The holy man, whose favour'd glance
Hath sainted visions known;
Angels have met him on the way,
Beside the blessed martyr's bay,
And by Columba's stone. [high
His monks have heard their hymnings
Sound from the summit of Dun-Y,
To cheer his penance lone,
When at each cross, on girth and wold
(Their number thrice a hundred-fold),
His prayer he made, his beads he told,
With Aves many a one—
He comes our feuds to reconcile,
A sainted man from sainted isle;
We will his holy doom abide,
The Abbot shall our strife decide."

XXII.

Scarcely this fair accord was o'er,
When through the wide revolving door
The black-stoled brethren wind;
Twelve sandall'd monks, who relics bore,
With many a torch-bearer before,
And many a cross behind.
Then sunk each fierce uplifted hand,
And dagger bright and flashing brand
Dropp'd swiftly at the sight;
They vanish'd from the Churchman's eye,
As shooting stars, that glance and die,
Dart from the vault of night.

XXIII.

The Abbot on the threshold stood,
And in his hand the holy rood;
Back on his shoulders flow'd his hood,
The torch's glaring ray
Show'd, in its red and flashing light,
His wither'd cheek and amice white,
His blue eye glistening cold and bright,
His tresses scant and grey.

"Fair Lords," he said, "Our Lady's love,
And peace be with you from above,
And Benedicite! [here!—
—But what means this?—no peace is
Do dirks unsheathed suit bridal cheer?
Or are these naked brands
A seemly show for Churchman's sight,
When he comes summon'd to unite
Betrothèd hearts and hands?"

XXIV.

Then, cloaking hate with fiery zeal,
Proud Lorn first answer'd the appeal;—
"Thou com'st, O holy Man,
True sons of blessed Church to greet,
But little deeming here to meet
A wretch, beneath the ban
Of Pope and Church, for murder done
Even on the sacred altar-stone!—
Well may'st thou wonder we should know
Such miscreant here, nor lay him low,
Or dream of greeting, peace, or truce,
With excommunicated Bruce!
Yet well I grant, to end debate,
Thy sainted voice decide his fate."

XXV.

Then Ronald pled the stranger's cause,
And knighthood's oath and honour's laws;
And Isabel, on bended knee,
Brought pray'rs and tears to back the plea;
And Edith lent her generous aid,
And wept, and Lorn for mercy pray'd.
"Hence," he exclaim'd, "degenerate maid!
Was't not enough, to Ronald's bower
I brought thee, like a paramour,*
Or bond-maid at her master's gate,
His careless cold approach to wait?—
But the bold Lord of Cumberland,
The gallant Clifford, seeks thy hand;
His it shall be—Nay, no reply!
Hence! till those rebel eyes be dry."—
With grief the Abbot heard and saw,
Yet nought relax'd his brow of awe.

XXVI.

Then Argentine, in England's name,
So highly urged his sovereign's claim,
He waked a spark, that, long suppress'd,
Had smoulder'd in Lord Ronald's breast;
And now, as from the flint the fire,
Flash'd forth at once his generous ire.
"Enough of noble blood," he said,
"By English Edward had been shed,
Since matchless Wallace first had been
In mock'ry crown'd with wreaths of green,*
And done to death by felon hand,
For guarding well his father's land.
Where's Nigel Bruce? and De la Haye,
And valiant Seton—where are they?
Where Somerville, the kind and free?
And Fraser, flower of chivalry?

Have they not been on gibbet bound,
Their quarters flung to hawk and hound,
And hold we here a cold debate,
To yield more victims to their fate?
What! can the English Leopard's mood
Never be gorged with northern blood?
Was not the life of Athole shed,
To soothe the tyrant's sicken'd bed?*
And must his word, till dying day,
Be nought but quarter, hang, and slay!—
Thou frown'st, De Argentine,—My gage
Is prompt to prove the strife I wage."—

XXVII.

"Nor deem," said stout Dunvegan's knight,
"That thou shalt brave alone the fight!
By saints of isle and mainland both,
By Woden wild (my grandsire's oath),
Let Rome and England do their worst,
Howe'er attainted or accursed.
If Bruce shall e'er find friends again,
Once more to brave a battle-plain,
If Douglas couch again his lance,
Or Randolph dare another chance,
Old Torquil will not be to lack
With twice a thousand at his back.—
Nay, chafe not at my bearing bold,
Good Abbot! for thou know'st of old,
Torquil's rude thought and stubborn will
Smack of the wild Norwegian still;
Nor will I barter Freedom's cause
For England's wealth, or Rome's applause."

XXVIII.

The Abbot seem'd with eye severe
The hardy Chieftain's speech to hear;
Then on King Robert turn'd the Monk,
But twice his courage came and sunk,
Confronted with the hero's look;
Twice fell his eye, his accents shook;
At length, resolved in tone and brow,
Sternly he question'd him—"And thou,
Unhappy! what hast thou to plead,
Why I denounce not on thy deed
That awful doom which canons tell
Shuts paradise, and opens hell?
Anathema of power so dread,
It blends the living with the dead,
Bids each good angel soar away,
And every ill one claim his prey;
Expels thee from the Church's care,
And deafens Heaven against thy prayer;
Arms every hand against thy life,
Bans all who aid thee in the strife,
Nay, each whose succour, cold and scant,
With meanest alms relieves thy want;
Haunts thee while living,—and, when dead,
Dwells on thy yet devoted head,
Rends Honour's scutcheon from thy hearse,
Stills o'er thy bier the holy verse,
And spurns thy corpse from hallow'd ground,
Flung like vile carrion to the hound;
Such is the dire and desperate doom
For sacrilege, decreed by Rome;
And such the well-deservèd meed
Of thine unhallow'd, ruthless deed."—

XXIX.

"Abbot!" The Bruce replied, "thy charge
It boots not to dispute at large.
This much, howe'er, I bid thee know,
No selfish vengeance dealt the blow,
For Comyn died his country's foe.
Nor blame I friends whose ill-timed speed
Fulfill'd my soon-repented deed,
Nor censure those from whose stern tongue
The dire anathema has rung.
I only blame mine own wild ire,
By Scotland's wrongs incensed to fire.
Heaven knows my purpose to atone,
Far as I may, the evil done,
And hears a penitent's appeal
From papal curse and prelate's zeal.
My first and dearest task achieved,
Fair Scotland from her thrall relieved,
Shall many a priest in cope and stole
Say requiem for Red Comyn's soul,
While I the blessed cross advance,
And expiate this unhappy chance
In Palestine, with sword and lance.*
But, while content the Church should know
My conscience owns the debt I owe,
Unto De Argentine and Lorn
The name of traitor I return,
Bid them defiance stern and high,
And give them in their throats the lie!
These brief words spoke, I speak no more.
Do what thou wilt; my shrift is o'er."

XXX.

Like man by prodigy amazed,
Upon the King the Abbot gazed;
Then o'er his pallid features glance
Convulsions of ecstatic trance.
His breathing came more thick and fast,
And from his pale blue eyes were cast
Strange rays of wild and wandering light
Uprise his locks of silver white,
Flush'd is his brow, through every vein
In azure tide the currents strain,
And undistinguish'd accents broke
The awful silence ere he spoke.

XXXI.

"De Bruce! I rose with purpose dread
To speak my curse upon thy head,*
And give thee as an outcast o'er
To him who burns to shed thy gore;—

But, like the Midianite of old,
Who stood on Zophim, heaven-controll'd,
I feel within mine agèd breast
A power that will not be repress'd.
It prompts my voice, it swells my veins,
It burns, it maddens, it constrains!—
De Bruce, thy sacrilegious blow
Hath at God's altar slain thy foe:
O'ermaster'd yet by high behest,
I bless thee, and thou shalt be bless'd!"
He spoke, and o'er the astonish'd throng
Was silence, awful, deep, and long.

XXXII.

Again that light has fired his eye,
Again his form swells bold and high,
The broken voice of age is gone,
'Tis vigorous manhood's lofty tone:—
"Thrice vanquish'd on the battle-plain,
Thy followers slaughter'd, fled, or ta'en,
A hunted wanderer on the wild,
On foreign shores a man exiled,*
Disown'd, deserted, and distress'd,
I bless thee, and thou shalt be bless'd!
Bless'd in the hall and in the field,
Under the mantle as the shield.
Avenger of thy country's shame,
Restorer of her injured fame,
Bless'd in thy sceptre and thy sword,
De Bruce, fair Scotland's rightful Lord,
Bless'd in thy deeds and in thy fame,
What lengthen'd honours wait thy name!
In distant ages, sire to son
Shall tell thy tale of freedom won,
And teach his infants, in the use
Of earliest speech, to falter Bruce.
Go, then, triumphant! sweep along
Thy course, the theme of many a song!
The Power, whose dictates swell my breast,
Hath bless'd thee, and thou shalt be bless'd!—
Enough—my short-lived strength decays,
And sinks the momentary blaze.—
Heaven hath our destined purpose broke,
Not here must nuptial vow be spoke;
Brethren, our errand here is o'er,
Our task discharged:—Unmoor, unmoor!"
His priests received the exhausted Monk,
As breathless in their arms he sunk.
Punctual his orders to obey,
The train refused all longer stay,
Embark'd, raised sail, and bore away.

CANTO THIRD.

I.

HAST thou not mark'd, when o'er thy startled head
Sudden and deep the thunder-peal has roll'd,
How, when its echoes fell, a silence dead [the wold?
Sunk on the wood, the meadow, and
The rye-grass shakes not on the sod-built fold, [and still,
The rustling aspen's leaves are mute
The wall-flower waves not on the ruin'd hold, [and shrill,
Till, murmuring distant first, then near
The savage whirlwind wakes, and sweeps the groaning hill.

II.

Artornish! such a silence sunk
Upon thy halls, when that grey Monk
His prophet speech had spoke;
And his obedient brethren's sail
Was stretch'd to meet the southern gale
Before a whisper woke.
Then murmuring sounds of doubt and fear,
Close pour'd in many an anxious ear,
The solemn stillness broke;
And still they gazed with eager guess,
Where, in an oriel's deep recess,
The Island Prince seem'd bent to press
What Lorn, by his impatient cheer,
And gesture fierce, scarce deign'd to hear.

III.

Starting at length, with frowning look,
His hand he clench'd, his head he shook,
And sternly flung apart;—
"And deem'st thou me so mean of mood,
As to forget the mortal feud,
And clasp the hand with blood imbrued
From my dear Kinsman's heart?
Is this thy rede?—a due return
For ancient league and friendship sworn!
But well our mountain proverb shows
The faith of Islesmen ebbs and flows.
Be it even so—believe, ere long,
He that now bears shall wreak the wrong,—
Call Edith—call the Maid of Lorn!—
My sister, slaves!—for further scorn,
Be sure nor she nor I will stay.—
Away, De Argentine, away!—
We nor ally nor brother know,
In Bruce's friend, or England's foe."

IV.

But who the Chieftain's rage can tell,
When, sought from lowest dungeon cell
To highest tower the castle round,
No Lady Edith was there found!
He shouted, "Falsehood!—treachery!—
Revenge and blood!—a lordly meed
To him that will avenge the deed!
A Baron's lands!"—His frantic mood
Was scarcely by the news withstood,
That Morag shared his sister's flight,
And that, in hurry of the night,
'Scaped noteless, and without remark,
Two strangers sought the Abbot's bark.—

"Man every galley!—fly—pursue!
The priest his treachery shall rue!
Ay, and the time shall quickly come,
When we shall hear the thanks that Rome
Will pay his feignèd prophecy!"
Such was fierce Lorn's indignant cry;
And Cormac Doil in haste obey'd,
Hoisted his sail, his anchor weigh'd
(For, glad of each pretext for spoil,
A pirate sworn was Cormac Doil).
But others, lingering, spoke apart,—
"The Maid has given her maiden heart
To Ronald of the Isles,
And, fearful lest her brother's word
Bestow her on that English Lord,
She seeks Iona's piles,
And wisely deems it best to dwell
A votaress in the holy cell,
Until these feuds so fierce and fell
The Abbot reconciles."

V.

As, impotent of ire, the hall
Echo'd to Lorn's impatient call,
"My horse, my mantle, and my train!
Let none who honours Lorn remain!"—
Courteous, but stern, a bold request
To Bruce De Argentine express'd.
"Lord Earl," he said,—"I cannot chuse
But yield such title to the Bruce,
Though name and earldom both are gone,
Since he braced rebel's armour on—
But, Earl or Serf—rude phrase was thine
Of late, and launch'd at Argentine;
Such as compels me to demand
Redress of honour at thy hand.
We need not to each other tell,
That both can wield their weapons well;
Then do me but the soldier grace,
This glove upon thy helm to place
Where we may meet in fight;
And I will say, as still I've said,
Though by ambition far misled,
Thou art a noble knight."—

VI.

"And I," the princely Bruce replied,
"Might term it stain on knighthood's pride
That the bright sword of Argentine
Should in a tyrant's quarrel shine;
But, for your brave request,
Be sure the honour'd pledge you gave
In every battle-field shall wave
Upon my helmet-crest:
Believe, that if my hasty tongue
Hath done thine honour causeless wrong,
It shall be well redress'd.
Not dearer to my soul was glove,
Bestow'd in youth by lady's love,
Than this which thou hast given!
Thus, then, my noble foe I greet;
Health and high fortune till we meet
And then—what pleases Heaven."

VII.

Thus parted they—for now, with sound
Like waves roll'd back from rocky ground,
The friends of Lorn retire;
Each mainland chieftain, with his train,
Draws to his mountain towers again,
Pondering how mortal schemes prove vain,
And mortal hopes expire.
But through the castle double guard,
By Ronald's charge, kept wakeful ward,
Wicket and gate were trebly barr'd,
By beam and bolt and chain;
Then of the guests, in courteous sort,
He pray'd excuse for mirth broke short,
And bade them in Artornish fort
In confidence remain.
Now torch and menial tendance led
Chieftain and knight to bower and bed,
And beads were told, and Aves said,
And soon they sunk away
Into such sleep, as wont to shed
Oblivion on the weary head,
After a toilsome day.

VIII.

But soon uproused, the Monarch cried
To Edward slumbering by his side,
"Awake, or sleep for aye!
Even now there jarr'd a secret door—
A taper-light gleams on the floor—
Up, Edward, up, I say!
Some one glides in like midnight ghost—
Nay, strike not! 'tis our noble Host."
Advancing then his taper's flame,
Ronald stept forth, and with him came
Dunvegan's chief—each bent the knee
To Bruce in sign of fealty,
And proffer'd him his sword,
And hail'd him in a monarch's style,
As king of mainland and of isle,
And Scotland's rightful lord.
"And O," said Ronald, "Own'd of Heaven!
Say, is my erring youth forgiven,
By falsehood's arts from duty driven,
Who rebel falchion drew,
Yet ever to thy deeds of fame,
Even while I strove against thy claim,
Paid homage just and true?"—
"Alas! dear youth, the unhappy time,"
Answer'd the Bruce, "must bear the crime,
Since, guiltier far than you,
Even I"—he paused; for Falkirk's woes
Upon his conscious soul arose.*
The Chieftain to his breast he press'd,
And in a sigh conceal'd the rest.

IX.

They proffer'd aid, by arms and might,
To repossess him in his right;
But well their counsels must be weigh'd,
Ere banners raised and musters made,
For English hire and Lorn's intrigues
Bound many chiefs in southern leagues.
In answer, Bruce his purpose bold
To his new vassals frankly told.
"The winter worn in exile o'er,
I long'd for Carrick's kindred shore.
I thought upon my native Ayr,
And long'd to see the burly fare
That Clifford makes, whose lordly call
Now echoes through my father's hall.
But first my course to Arran led,
Where valiant Lennox gathers head,
And on the sea, by tempest toss'd,
Our barks dispersed, our purpose cross'd.
Mine own, a hostile sail to shun,
Far from her destined course had run,
When that wise will, which masters ours,
Compell'd us to your friendly towers."

X.

Then Torquil spoke:—"The time craves
We must not linger in our deed, [speed!
But instant pray our Sovereign Liege,
To shun the perils of a siege.
The vengeful Lorn, with all his powers,
Lies but too near Artornish towers,
And England's light-arm'd vessels ride,
Not distant far, the waves of Clyde,
Prompt at these tidings to unmoor,
And sweep each strait, and guard each
Then, till this fresh alarm pass by, [shore.
Secret and safe my Liege must lie
In the far bounds of friendly Skye,
Torquil thy pilot and thy guide."—
"Not so, brave Chieftain," Ronald cried;
"Myself will on my Sovereign wait,
And raise in arms the men of Sleate,
Whilst thou, renown'd where chiefs debate,
Shalt sway their souls by counsel sage,
And awe them by thy locks of age."
—"And if my words in weight shall fail,
This ponderous sword shall turn the scale."

XI.

—"The scheme," said Bruce, "contents me well;
Meantime, 'twere best that Isabel,
For safety, with my bark and crew,
Again to friendly Erin drew.
There Edward, too, shall with her wend,
In need to cheer her and defend,
And muster up each scatter'd friend."—
Here seem'd it as Lord Ronald's ear
Would other counsel gladlier hear;
But, all achieved as soon as plann'd,
Both barks, in secret arm'd and mann'd,
From out the haven bore;
On different voyage forth they ply,
This for the coast of wingèd Skye,
And that for Erin's shore.

XII.

With Bruce and Ronald bides the tale.—
To favouring winds they gave the sail,
Till Mull's dark headlands scarce they knew,
And Ardnamurchan's hills were blue.
But then the squalls blew close and hard,
And, fain to strike the galley's yard,
And take them to the oar,
With these rude seas, in weary plight,
They strove the livelong day and night,
Nor till the dawning had a sight
Of Skye's romantic shore.
Where Coolin stoops him to the west,
They saw upon his shiver'd crest
The sun's arising gleam;
But such the labour and delay,
Ere they were moor'd in Scavigh bay
(For calmer heaven compell'd to stay),
He shot a western beam.
Then Ronald said—"If true mine eye,
These are the savage wilds that lie
North of Strathnardill and Dunskye;*
No human foot comes here,
And, since these adverse breezes blow,
If my good Liege love hunter's bow,
What hinders that on land we go,
And strike a mountain-deer?
Allan, my page, shall with us wend;
A bow full deftly can he bend,
And, if we meet a herd, may send
A shaft shall mend our cheer."
Then each took bow and bolts in hand,
Their row-boat launch'd and leapt to land,
And left their skiff and train,
Where a wild stream, with headlong shock,
Came brawling down its bed of rock,
To mingle with the main.

XIII.

A while their route they silent made,
As men who stalk for mountain-deer,
Till the good Bruce to Ronald said—
"St. Mary! what a scene is here!—
I've traversed many a mountain-strand,
Abroad and in my native land,
And it has been my lot to tread
Where safety more than pleasure led;
Thus, many a waste I've wander'd o'er,
Clombe many a crag, cross'd many a moor,
But, by my halidome,
A scene so rude, so wild as this,
Yet so sublime in barrenness,
Ne'er did my wandering footsteps press,
Where'er I happ'd to roam."

XIV.

No marvel thus the Monarch spake;
For rarely human eye has known

A scene so stern as that dread lake,
With its dark ledge of barren stone.
Seems that primeval earthquake's sway
Hath rent a strange and shatter'd way
Through the rude bosom of the hill,
And that each naked precipice,
Sable ravine, and dark abyss,
Tells of the outrage still.
The wildest glen, but this, can show
Some touch of Nature's genial glow;
On high Benmore green mosses grow,
And heath-bells bud in deep Glencroe,
And copse on Cruchan-Ben;
But here,—above, around, below,
On mountain or in glen,
Nor tree, nor shrub, nor plant, nor flower,
Nor aught of vegetative power,
The weary eye may ken.
For all is rocks at random thrown,
Black waves, bare crags, and banks of stone,
As if were here denied,
The summer sun, the spring's sweet dew,
That clothe with many a varied hue
The bleakest mountain-side.

XV.

And wilder, forward as they wound,
Were the proud cliffs and lake profound.
Huge terraces of granite black
Afforded rude and cumber'd track;
For from the mountain hoar,
Hurl'd headlong in some night of fear,
When yell'd the wolf and fled the deer,
Loose crags had toppled o'er; [lay,
And some, chance-poised and balanced,
So that a stripling arm might sway
A mass no host could raise,
In Nature's rage at random thrown,
Yet trembling like the Druid's stone
On its precarious base.
The evening mists, with ceaseless change,
Now clothed the mountains' lofty range,
Now left their foreheads bare,
And round the skirts their mantle furl'd,
Or on the sable waters curl'd,
Or on the eddying breezes whirl'd,
Dispersed in middle air.
And oft, condensed, at once they lower,
When, brief and fierce, the mountain shower
Pours like a torrent down,
And when return the sun's glad beams,
Whiten'd with foam a thousand streams
Leap from the mountain's crown.

XVI.

"This lake," said Bruce, "whose barriers
Are precipices sharp and sheer,
Yielding no track for goat or deer,
Save the black shelves we tread,
How term you its dark waves? and how
Yon northern mountain's pathless brow,
And yonder peak of dread,
That to the evening sun uplifts
The grisly gulfs and slaty rifts,
Which seam its shiver'd head?"
"Coriskin call the dark lake's name,
Coolin the ridge, as bards proclaim,
From old Cuchullin, chief of fame.
But bards, familiar in our isles
Rather with Nature's frowns than smiles,
Full oft their careless humours please
By sportive names from scenes like these.
I would old Torquil were to show
His maidens with their breasts of snow,
Or that my noble Liege were nigh
To hear his Nurse sing lullaby! [white,
(The Maids—tall cliffs with breakers
The Nurse—a torrent's roaring might,)
Or that your eye could see the mood
Of Corryvrekin's whirlpool rude,
When dons the hag her whiten'd hood—
'Tis thus our islesmen's fancy frames,
For scenes so stern, fantastic names."

XVII.

Answer'd the Bruce, "And musing mind
Might here a graver moral find.
These mighty cliffs, that heave on high
Their naked brows to middle sky,
Indifferent to the sun or snow, [blow,
Where nought can fade, and nought can
May they not mark a Monarch's fate,—
Raised high 'mid storms of strife and state,
Beyond life's lowlier pleasures placed,
His soul a rock, his heart a waste?
O'er hope and love and fear aloft
High rears his crownèd head—But soft!
Look, underneath yon jutting crag
Are hunters and a slaughter'd stag.
Who may they be? But late you said
No steps these desert regions tread."—

XVIII.

"So said I—and believed in sooth,"
Ronald replied, "I spoke the truth.
Yet now I spy, by yonder stone,
Five men—they mark us, and come on;
And by their badge on bonnet borne,
I guess them of the land of Lorn,
Foes to my Liege."—"So let it be;
I've faced worse odds than five to three—
—But the poor page can little aid;
Then be our battle thus array'd,
If our free passage they contest;
Cope thou with two, I'll match the rest."—
"Not so, my Liege—for, by my life,
This sword shall meet the treble strife;
My strength, my skill in arms, more small,
And less the loss should Ronald fall,
But islesmen soon to soldiers grow,
Allan has sword as well as bow,
And were my Monarch's orders given,
Two shafts should make our number even."—

"No! not to save my life!" he said;
"Enough of blood rests on my head,
Too rashly spill'd—we soon shall know
Whether they come as friend or foe."

XIX.

Nigh came the strangers, and more nigh;—
Still less they pleased the Monarch's eye.
Men were they all of evil mien,
Down-look'd, unwilling to be seen;
They moved with half-resolvèd pace,
And bent on earth each gloomy face.
The foremost two were fair array'd,
With brogue and bonnet, trews and plaid,
And bore the arms of mountaineers,
Daggers and broadswords, bows and spears,
The three, that lagg'd small space behind,
Seem'd serfs of more degraded kind;
Goat-skins or deer-hides o'er them cast,
Made a rude fence against the blast;
Their arms and feet and heads were bare,
Matted their beards, unshorn their hair;
For arms, the caitiffs bore in hand
A club, an axe, a rusty brand.

XX.

Onward, still mute, they kept the track;—
"Tell who ye be, or else stand back,"
Said Bruce; "In deserts when they meet,
Men pass not as in peaceful street."
Still, at his stern command, they stood,
And proffer'd greeting brief and rude,
But acted courtesy so ill,
As seem'd of fear, and not of will.
"Wanderers we are, as you may be;
Men hither driven by wind and sea,
Who, if you list to taste our cheer,
Will share with you this fallow deer."—
"If from the sea, where lies your bark?"—
"Ten fathom deep in ocean dark!
Wreck'd yesternight: but we are men,
Who little sense of peril ken,
The shades come down—the day is shut—
Will you go with us to our hut?"—
"Our vessel waits us in the bay; [day."—
Thanks for your proffer—have good-
"Was that your galley, then, which rode
Not far from shore when evening [pain,
glow'd?"—
"It was."—"Then spare your needless
There will she now be sought in vain.
We saw her from the mountain-head,
When, with Saint George's blazon red,
A southern vessel bore in sight,
And yours raised sail, and took to flight."—

XXI.

"Now, by the rood, unwelcome news!"
Thus with Lord Ronald communed Bruce;
"Nor rests there light enough to show
If this their tale be true or no.
The men seem bred of churlish kind,
Yet mellow nuts have hardest rind;
We will go with them—food and fire
And sheltering roofs our wants require.
Sure guard 'gainst treachery will we keep,
And watch by turns our comrades' sleep.—
Good fellows, thanks; your guests we 'll be,
And well will pay the courtesy.
Come, lead us where your lodging lies,—
— Nay, soft! we mix not companies.—
Show us the path o'er crag and stone,
And we will follow you;—lead on."

XXII.

They reach'd the dreary cabin, made
Of sails against a rock display'd,
And there, on entering, found
A slender boy, whose form and mien
Ill suited with such savage scene,
In cap and cloak of velvet green,
Low seated on the ground.
His garb was such as minstrels wear,
Dark was his hue, and dark his hair,
His youthful cheek was marr'd by care,
His eyes in sorrow drown'd.
"Whence this poor boy?"—As Ronald spoke,
The voice his trance of anguish broke;
As if awaked from ghastly dream,
He raised his head with start and scream,
And wildly gazed around;
Then to the wall his face he turn'd,
And his dark neck with blushes burn'd.

XXIII.

"Whose is the boy?" again he said.—
"By chance of war our captive made;
He may be yours, if you should hold
That music has more charms than gold;
For, though from earliest childhood mute,
The lad can deftly touch the lute,
And on the rote and viol play,
And well can drive the time away
For those who love such glee;
For me, the favouring breeze, when loud
It pipes upon the galley's shroud,
Makes blither melody."—
"Hath he, then, sense of spoken sound?"—
"Ay; so his mother bade us know,
A crone in our late shipwreck drown'd,
And hence the silly stripling's woe.
More of the youth I cannot say,
Our captive but since yesterday;
When wind and weather wax'd so grim,
We little listed think of him.—
But why waste time in idle words?
Sit to your cheer—unbelt your swords."
Sudden the captive turn'd his head,
And one quick glance to Ronald sped.
It was a keen and warning look,
And well the Chief the signal took.

XXIV.

"Kind host," he said, "our needs require
A separate board and separate fire;
For know, that on a pilgrimage
Wend I, my comrade, and this page.
And, sworn to vigil and to fast,
Long as this hallow'd task shall last,
We never doff the plaid or sword,
Or feast us at a stranger's board;
And never share one common sleep,
But one must still his vigil keep.
Thus, for our separate use, good friend,
We 'll hold this hut's remoter end."—
"A churlish vow," the elder said,
"And hard, methinks, to be obey'd.
How say you, if, to wreak the scorn
That pays our kindness harsh return,
We should refuse to share our meal?"
"Then say we, that our swords are steel!
And our vow binds us not to fast,
Where gold or force may buy repast."—
Their host's dark brow grew keen and fell,
His teeth are clench'd, his features swell;
Yet sunk the felon's moody ire
Before Lord Ronald's glance of fire,
Nor could his craven courage brook
The Monarch's calm and dauntless look.
With laugh constrain'd,—"Let every man
Follow the fashion of his clan!
Each to his separate quarters keep,
And feed or fast, or wake or sleep."

XXV.

Their fire at separate distance burns,
By turns they eat, keep guard by turns;
For evil seem'd that old man's eye,
Dark and designing, fierce yet shy.
Still he avoided forward look,
But slow and circumspectly took
A circling, never-ceasing glance,
By doubt and cunning mark'd at once,
Which shot a mischief-boding ray,
From under eyebrows shagg'd and grey.
The younger, too, who seem'd his son,
Had that dark look the timid shun;
The half-clad serfs behind them sate,
And scowl'd a glare 'twixt fear and hate—
Till all, as darkness onward crept,
Couch'd down, and seem'd to sleep or slept.
Nor he, that boy, whose powerless tongue
Must trust his eyes to wail his wrong,
A longer watch of sorrow made,
But stretch'd his limbs to slumber laid.

XXVI.

Not in this dangerous host confides
The King, but wary watch provides.
Ronald keeps ward till midnight past,
Then wakes the King, young Allan last;
Thus rank'd, to give the youthful page
The rest required by tender age.
(What is Lord Ronald's wakeful thought,
To chase the languor toil had brought?—
For deem not that he deign'd to throw
Much care upon such coward foe),—
He thinks of lovely Isabel,
When at her foeman's feet she fell,
Nor less when, placed in princely selle,
She glanced on him with favouring eyes,
At Woodstocke when he won the prize,
Nor, fair in joy, in sorrow fair,
In pride of place as 'mid despair,
Must she alone engross his care.
His thoughts to his betrothèd bride,
To Edith, turn—O how decide,
When here his love and heart are given,
And there his faith stands plight to Heaven!
No drowsy ward 'tis his to keep,
For seldom lovers long for sleep.
Till sung his midnight hymn the owl,
Answer'd the dog-fox with his howl,
Then waked the King—at his request,
Lord Ronald stretch'd himself to rest.

XXVII.

What spell was good King Robert's, say,
To drive the weary night away?
His was the patriot's burning thought,
Of Freedom's battle bravely fought,
Of castles storm'd, of cities freed,
Of deep design and daring deed,
Of England's roses reft and torn,
And Scotland's cross in triumph worn,
Of rout and rally, war and truce,—
As heroes think, so thought the Bruce.
No marvel, 'mid such musings high,
Sleep shunn'd the Monarch's thoughtful eye.
Now over Coolin's eastern head
The greyish light begins to spread,
The otter to his cavern drew,
And clamour'd shrill the wakening mew;
Then watch'd the page—to needful rest
The King resign'd his anxious breast.

XXVIII.

To Allan's eyes was harder task
The weary watch their safeties ask.
He trimm'd the fire, and gave to shine
With bickering light the splinter'd pine;
Then gazed awhile, where silent laid
Their hosts were shrouded by the plaid.
But little fear waked in his mind,
For he was bred of martial kind,
And, if to manhood he arrive,
May match the boldest knight alive.
Then thought he of his mother's tower,
His little sisters' greenwood bower,
How there the Easter-gambols pass,
And of Dan Joseph's lengthen'd mass.
But still before his weary eye
In rays prolong'd the blazes die—

Again he roused him—on the lake
Look'd forth, where now the twilight-flake
Of pale cold dawn began to wake.
On Coolin's cliffs the mist lay furl'd,
The morning breeze the lake had curl'd,
The short dark waves, heaved to the land,
With ceaseless splash kiss'd cliff or sand;—
It was a slumberous sound—he turn'd
To tales at which his youth had burn'd,
Of pilgrim's path by demon cross'd,
Of sprightly elf or yelling ghost,
Of the wild witch's baneful cot,
And mermaid's alabaster grot,
Who bathes her limbs in sunless well,
Deep in Strathaird's enchanted cell.*
Thither in fancy rapt he flies,
And on his sight the vaults arise;
That hut's dark walls he sees no more,
His foot is on the marble floor,
And o'er his head the dazzling spars
Gleam like a firmament of stars!
—Hark! hears he not the sea-nymph speak
Her anger in that thrilling shriek!—
No! all too late, with Allan's dream
Mingled the captive's warning scream.
As from the ground he strives to start,
A ruffian's dagger finds his heart,
Upward he casts his dizzy eyes, . . .
Murmurs his master's name, . . . and dies.

XXIX.

Not so awoke the King! his hand
Snatch'd from the flame a knotted brand,
The nearest weapon of his wrath;
With this he cross'd the murderer's path,
And venged young Allan well!
The spatter'd brain and bubbling blood
Hiss'd on the half-extinguish'd wood,
The miscreant gasp'd and fell!
Nor rose in peace the Island Lord;
One caitiff died upon his sword,
And one beneath his grasp lies prone,
In mortal grapple overthrown.
But while Lord Ronald's dagger drank
The life-blood from his panting flank,
The Father-ruffian of the band
Behind him rears a coward hand!
—O, for a moment's aid,
Till Bruce, who deals no double blow,
Dash to the earth another foe,
Above his comrade laid!—
And it is gain'd—the captive sprung
On the raised arm, and closely clung,
And, ere he shook him loose,
The master'd felon press'd the ground,
And gasp'd beneath the mortal wound,
While o'er him stands the Bruce.

XXX.

"Miscreant! while lasts thy flitting spark,
Give me to know the purpose dark,
That arm'd thy hand with murderous knife,
Against offenceless stranger's life?"—
"No stranger thou!" with accent fell,
Murmur'd the wretch; "I know thee well;
And know thee for the foeman sworn
Of my high Chief, the mighty Lorn."—
"Speak yet again, and speak the truth
For thy soul's sake!—from whence this youth?
His country, birth, and name declare,
And thus one evil deed repair."
—"Vex me no more! . . . my blood runs cold . . .
No more I know than I have told.
We found him in a bark we sought
With different purpose . . . . and I thought" . . .
Fate cut him short; in blood and broil,
As he had lived, died Cormac Doil.

XXXI.

Then resting on his bloody blade,
The valiant Bruce to Ronald said,
"Now shame upon us both!—that boy
Lifts his mute face to heaven,
And clasps his hands, to testify
His gratitude to God on high,
For strange deliverance given.
His speechless gesture thanks hath paid,
Which our free tongues have left unsaid!"
He raised the youth with kindly word,
But mark'd him shudder at the sword:
He cleansed it from its hue of death,
And plunged the weapon in its sheath.
"Alas, poor child! unfitting part
Fate doom'd, when with so soft a heart,
And form so slight as thine,
She made thee first a pirate's slave,
Then, in his stead, a patron gave
Of wayward lot like mine;
A landless prince, whose wandering life
Is but one scene of blood and strife—
Yet scant of friends the Bruce shall be,
But he'll find resting-place for thee.—
Come, noble Ronald! o'er the dead
Enough thy generous grief is paid,
And well has Allan's fate been wroke;
Come, wend we hence—the day has broke.
Seek we our bark—I trust the tale
Was false, that she had hoisted sail.

XXXII.

Yet, ere they left that charnel-cell,
The Island Lord bade sad farewell
To Allan:—"Who shall tell this tale,"
He said, "in halls of Donagaile!
Oh, who his widow'd mother tell,
That, ere his bloom, her fairest fell!—
Rest thee, poor youth! and trust my care
For mass and knell and funeral prayer;
While o'er those caitiffs, where they lie,
The wolf shall snarl, the raven cry!"

And now the eastern mountain's head
On the dark lake threw lustre red;
Bright gleams of gold and purple streak
Ravine and precipice and peak—
(So earthly power at distance shows;
Reveals his splendour, hides his woes).
O'er sheets of granite, dark and broad,
Rent and unequal, lay the road.
In sad discourse the warriors wind,
And the mute captive moves behind.

CANTO FOURTH.

I.

STRANGER! if e'er thine ardent step hath traced
The northern realms of ancient Caledon,
Where the proud Queen of Wilderness hath placed,
By lake and cataract, her lonely throne;
Sublime but sad delight thy soul hath known, [high,
Gazing on pathless glen and mountain
Listing where from the cliffs the torrents thrown
Mingle their echoes with the eagle's cry,
And with the sounding lake, and with the moaning sky.

Yes! 'twas sublime, but sad.—The loneliness [eye;
Loaded thy heart, the desert tired thine
And strange and awful fears began to press
Thy bosom with a stern solemnity,
Then hast thou wish'd some woodman's cottage nigh, [low and mean;
Something that show'd of life, though
Glad sight, its curling wreath of smoke to spy, [have been,
Glad sound, its cock's blithe carol would
Or children whooping wild beneath the willows green.

Such are the scenes, where savage grandeur wakes
An awful thrill that softens into sighs;
Such feelings rouse them by dim Rannoch's lakes, [rise;
In dark Glencoe such gloomy raptures
Or farther, where, beneath the northern skies, [hoar—
Chides wild Loch-Eribol his caverns
But, be the minstrel judge, they yield the prize
Of desert dignity to that dread shore,
That sees grim Coolin rise, and hears Coriskin roar.

II.

Through such wild scenes the champion pass'd,
When bold halloo and bugle-blast
Upon the breeze came loud and fast.
"There," said the Bruce, "rung Edward's horn!
What can have caused such brief return?
And see, brave Ronald,—see him dart
O'er stock and stone like hunted hart,
Precipitate, as is the use,
In war or sport, of Edward Bruce.
—He marks us, and his eager cry
Will tell his news ere he be nigh."

III.

Loud Edward shouts, "What make ye here,
Warring upon the mountain deer,
When Scotland wants her king?
A bark from Lennox cross'd our track,
With her in speed I hurried back,
These joyful news to bring—
The Stuart stirs in Teviotdale,
And Douglas wakes his native vale;
Thy storm-toss'd fleet hath won its way
With little loss to Brodick-Bay,
And Lennox, with a gallant band,
Waits but thy coming and command
To waft them o'er to Carrick strand.
There are blithe news!—but mark the close!
Edward, the deadliest of our foes,
As with his host he northward pass'd,
Hath on the Borders breathed his last."

IV.

Still stood the Bruce—his steady cheek
Was little wont his joy to speak,
But then his colour rose:
"Now, Scotland! shortly shalt thou see
With God's high will, thy children free,
And vengeance on thy foes!
Yet to no sense of selfish wrongs,
Bear witness with me, Heaven, belongs
My joy o'er Edward's bier;*
I took my knighthood at his hand,
And lordship held of him, and land,
And well may vouch it here,
That, blot the story from his page,
Of Scotland ruin'd in his rage,
You read a monarch brave and sage,
And to his people dear."—
"Let London's burghers mourn her Lord,
And Croydon monks his praise record,"
The eager Edward said;
"Eternal as his own, my hate
Surmounts the bounds of mortal fate,
And dies not with the dead!
Such hate was his on Solway's strand,
When vengeance clench'd his palsied hand,
That pointed yet to Scotland's land,
As his last accents pray'd
Disgrace and curse upon his heir,
If he one Scottish head should spare,
Till stretch'd upon the bloody lair
Each rebel corpse was laid!
Such hate was his, when his last breath,
Renounced the peaceful house of death,

And bade his bones to Scotland's coast
Be borne by his remorseless host,
As if his dead and stony eye
Could still enjoy her misery!
Such hate was his—dark, deadly, long!
Mine,—as enduring, deep, and strong!"—

V.

"Let women, Edward, war with words,
With curses monks, but men with swords:
Nor doubt of living foes, to sate
Deepest revenge and deadliest hate.
Now to the sea! Behold the beach,
And see the galleys' pendants stretch
Their fluttering length down favouring gale!
Aboard, aboard! and hoist the sail.
Hold we our way for Arran first,
Where meet in arms our friends dispersed;
Lennox the loyal, De la Haye,
And Boyd the bold in battle fray.
I long the hardy band to head,
And see once more my standard spread.—
Does noble Ronald share our course,
Or stay to raise his island force?"—
"Come weal, come woe, by Bruce's side,"
Replied the Chief, "will Ronald bide.
And since two galleys yonder ride,
Be mine, so please my liege, dismiss'd
To wake to arms the clans of Uist,
And all who hear the Minche's roar,
On the Long Island's lonely shore.
The nearer Isles, with slight delay,
Ourselves may summon in our way;
And soon on Arran's shore shall meet,
With Torquil's aid, a gallant fleet,
If aught avails their Chieftain's hest
Among the islesmen of the west."

VI.

Thus was their venturous council said.
But, ere their sails the galleys spread,
Coriskin dark and Coolin high
Echoed the dirge's doleful cry.
Along that sable lake pass'd slow,—
Fit scene for such a sight of woe,—
The sorrowing islesmen, as they bore
The murder'd Allan to the shore.
At every pause, with dismal shout,
Their coronach of grief rung out,
And ever, when they moved again,
The pipes resumed their clamorous strain,
And, with the pibroch's shrilling wail,
Mourn'd the young heir of Donagaile.
Round and around, from cliff and cave,
His answer stern old Coolin gave,
Till high upon his misty side
Languish'd the mournful notes, and died.
For never sounds, by mortal made,
Attain'd his high and haggard head,
That echoes but the tempest's moan,
Or the deep thunder's rending groan.

VII.

Merrily, merrily bounds the bark,
She bounds before the gale,
The mountain breeze from Ben-na-darch
Is joyous in her sail!
With fluttering sound like laughter hoarse,
The cords and canvas strain,
The waves, divided by her force,
In rippling eddies chased her course,
As if they laugh'd again.
Not down the breeze more blithely flew,
Skimming the wave, the light sea-mew,
Than the gay galley bore
Her course upon that favouring wind,
And Coolin's crest has sunk behind,
And Slapin's cavern'd shore.
'Twas then that warlike signals wake
Dunscaith's dark towers and Eisord's lake,
And soon, from Cavilgarrigh's head,
Thick wreaths of eddying smoke were spread;
A summons these of war and wrath
To the brave clans of Sleat and Strath,
And, ready at the sight,
Each warrior to his weapons sprung,
And targe upon his shoulder flung,
Impatient for the fight.
Mac-Kinnon's chief, in warfare grey,
Had charge to muster their array,
And guide their barks to Brodick-Bay.

VIII.

Signal of Ronald's high command,
A beacon gleam'd o'er sea and land,
From Canna's tower, that, steep and grey,
Like falcon-nest o'erhangs the bay.
Seek not the giddy crag to climb,
To view the turret scathed by time,
It is a task of doubt and fear
To aught but goat or mountain-deer.
But rest thee on the silver beach,
And let the agèd herdsman teach
His tale of former day;
His cur's wild clamour he shall chide,
And for thy seat by ocean's side,
His varied plaid display;
Then tell, how with their Chieftain came,
In ancient times, a foreign dame
To yonder turret grey.
Stern was her Lord's suspicious mind,
Who in so rude a jail confined
So soft and fair a thrall!
And oft, when moon on ocean slept,
That lovely lady sate and wept
Upon the castle-wall,
And turn'd her eye to southern climes,
And thought perchance of happier times,
And touch'd her lute by fits, and sung
Wild ditties in her native tongue.
And still, when on the cliff and bay,
Placid and pale the moonbeams play,

And every breeze is mute,
Upon the lone Hebridean's ear
Steals a strange pleasure mix'd with fear,
While from that cliff he seems to hear
The murmur of a lute,
And sounds, as of a captive lone,
That mourns her woes in tongue unknown.—
Strange is the tale—but all too long
Already hath it staid the song—
Yet who may pass them by,
That crag and tower in ruins grey,
Nor to their hapless tenant pay
The tribute of a sigh!

IX.

Merrily, merrily bounds the bark
O'er the broad ocean driven,
Her path by Ronin's mountains dark
The steersman's hand hath given.
And Ronin's mountains dark have sent
Their hunters to the shore,*
And each his ashen bow unbent,
And gave his pastime o'er,
And at the Island Lord's command,
For hunting spear took warrior's brand.
On Scooreigg next a warning light
Summon'd her warriors to the fight;
A numerous race, ere stern MacLeod
O'er their bleak shores in vengeance strode,*
When all in vain the ocean-cave
Its refuge to his victims gave.
The Chief, relentless in his wrath,
With blazing heath blockades the path;
In dense and stifling volumes roll'd,
The vapour fill'd the cavern'd hold!
The warrior-threat, the infant's plain,
The mother's screams, were heard in vain!
The vengeful Chief maintains his fires,
Till in the vault a tribe expires! [gloom,
The bones which strew that cavern's
Too well attest their dismal doom.

X.

Merrily, merrily goes the bark
On a breeze from the northward free,
So shoots through the morning sky the lark,
Or the swan through the summer sea.
The shores of Mull on the eastward lay,
And Ulva dark and Colonsay,
And all the group of islets gay
That guard famed Staffa round.
Then all unknown its columns rose,
Where dark and undisturb'd repose
The cormorant had found,
And the shy seal had quiet home,
And welter'd in that wondrous dome,
Where, as to shame the temples deck'd
By skill of earthly architect,
Nature herself, it seem'd would raise
A Minster to her Maker's praise!
Not for a meaner use ascend
Her columns, or her arches bend;
Nor of a theme less solemn tells
That mighty surge that ebbs and swells,
And still, between each awful pause,
From the high vault an answer draws,
In varied tone prolong'd and high,
That mocks the organ's melody.
Nor doth its entrance front in vain
To old Iona's holy fane,
That Nature's voice might seem to say,
"Well hast thou done, frail Child of clay!
Thy humble powers that stately shrine
Task'd high and hard—but witness mine!"

XI.

Merrily, merrily goes the bark,
Before the gale she bounds;
So darts the dolphin from the shark,
Or the deer before the hounds.
They left Loch-Tua on their lee, [Tiree,
And they waken'd the men of the wild
And the Chief of the sandy Coll;
They paused not at Columba's isle,
Though peal'd the bells from the holy pile
With long and measured toll;
No time for matin or for mass,
And the sounds of the holy summons pass
Away in the billows' roll.
Lochbuie's fierce and warlike Lord
Their signal saw, and grasp'd his sword,
And verdant Islay call'd her host,
And the clans of Jura's rugged coast
Lord Ronald's call obey,
And Scarba's isle, whose tortured shore
Still rings to Corrievreken's roar,
And lonely Colonsay;
—Scenes sung by him who sings no more![*]
His bright and brief career is o'er,
And mute his tuneful strains;
Quench'd is his lamp of varied lore,
That lov'd the light of song to pour;
A distant and a deadly shore
Has LEYDEN's cold remains!

XII.

Ever the breeze blows merrily,
But the galley ploughs no more the sea.
Lest, rounding wild Cantyre, they meet
The southern foemen's watchful fleet,
They held unwonted way;—
Up Tarbat's western lake they bore,
Then dragg'd their bark the isthmus o'er,*
As far as Kilmaconnel's shore,
Upon the eastern bay.
It was a wondrous sight to see
Topmast and pennon glitter free,
High raised above the greenwood tree,
As on dry land the galley moves,
By cliff and copse and alder groves.

Deep import from that selcouth sign,
Did many a mountain Seer divine,
For ancient legends told the Gael,
That when a royal bark should sail
O'er Kilmaconnel moss,
Old Albyn should in fight prevail,
And every foe should faint and quail
Before her silver Cross.

XIII.

Now launch'd once more, the inland sea
They furrow with fair augury,
And steer for Arran's isle;
The sun, ere yet he sunk behind
Ben-Ghoil, "the Mountain of the Wind,"
Gave his grim peaks a greeting kind,
And bade Loch Ranza smile.*
Thither their destined course they drew;
It seem'd the isle her monarch knew,
So brilliant was the landward view,
The ocean so serene;
Each puny wave in diamonds roll'd
O'er the calm deep, where hues of gold
With azure strove and green.
The hill, the vale, the tree, the tower,
Glow'd with the tints of evening's hour,
The beach was silver sheen,
The wind breathed soft as lover's sigh,
And, oft renew'd, seem'd oft to die,
With breathless pause between.
O who, with speech of war and woes,
Would wish to break the soft repose
Of such enchanting scene!

XIV.

Is it of war Lord Ronald speaks?
The blush that dyes his manly cheeks,
The timid look and downcast eye,
And faltering voice the theme deny.
And good King Robert's brow express'd,
He ponder'd o'er some high request,
As doubtful to approve;
Yet in his eye and lip the while,
Dwelt the half-pitying glance and smile,
Which manhood's graver mood beguile,
When lovers talk of love.
Anxious his suit Lord Ronald pled;
—"And for my bride betrothed," he said,
"My Liege has heard the rumour spread,
Of Edith from Artornish fled.
Too hard her fate—I claim no right
To blame her for her hasty flight;
Be joy and happiness her lot!—
But she hath fled the bridal knot,
And Lorn recall'd his promised plight,
In the assembled chieftains' sight.—
When, to fulfil our fathers' band,
I proffer'd all I could—my hand—
I was repulsed with scorn;
Mine honour I should ill assert,
And worse the feelings of my heart,
If I should play a suitor's part
Again, to pleasure Lorn."

XV.

"Young Lord," the royal Bruce replied,
"That question must the Church decide;
Yet seems it hard, since rumours state
Edith takes Clifford for her mate,
The very tie, which she hath broke,
To thee should still be binding yoke.
But, for my sister Isabel—
The mood of woman who can tell?
I guess the Champion of the Rock,
Victorious in the tourney shock,
That knight unknown, to whom the prize
She dealt,—had favour in her eyes;
But since our brother Nigel's fate,
Our ruin'd house and hapless state,
From worldly joy and hope estranged,
Much is the hapless mourner changed.
Perchance," here smiled the noble King,
"This tale may other musings bring.
Soon shall we know—yon mountains hide
The little convent of Saint Bride;
There, sent by Edward, she must stay,
Till fate shall give more prosperous day;
And thither will I bear thy suit,
Nor will thine advocate be mute."

XVI.

As thus they talk'd in earnest mood,
That speechless boy beside them stood.
He stoop'd his head against the mast,
And bitter sobs came thick and fast,
A grief that would not be repress'd,
But seem'd to burst his youthful breast.
His hands, against his forehead held,
As if by force his tears repell'd,
But through his fingers, long and slight,
Fast trill'd the drops of crystal bright.
Edward, who walk'd the deck apart,
First spied this conflict of the heart.
Thoughtless as brave, with bluntness kind
He sought to cheer the sorrower's mind;
By force the slender hand he drew [dew.
From those poor eyes that stream'd with
As in his hold the stripling strove
('Twas a rough grasp, though meant in love),
Away his tears the warrior swept,
And bade shame on him that he wept.
"I would to Heaven, thy helpless tongue
Could tell me who hath wrought thee wrong!
For, were he of our crew the best,
The insult went not unredress'd.
Come, cheer thee; thou art now of age
To be a warrior's gallant page;
Thou shalt be mine!—a palfrey fair
O'er hill and holt my boy shall bear,

To hold my bow in hunting grove,
Or speed on errand to my love;
For well I wot thou wilt not tell
The temple where my wishes dwell."

XVII.

Bruce interposed,—"Gay Edward, no,
This is no youth to hold thy bow,
To fill thy goblet, or to bear
Thy message light to lighter fair.
Thou art a patron all too wild
And thoughtless, for this orphan child.
See'st thou not how apart he steals,
Keeps lonely couch, and lonely meals?
Fitter by far in yon calm cell
To tend our sister Isabel,
With Father Augustine to share
The peaceful change of convent prayer,
Than wander wild adventures through,
With such a reckless guide as you."—
"Thanks, brother!" Edward answer'd gay,
"For the high laud thy words convey!
But we may learn some future day,
If thou or I can this poor boy
Protect the best, or best employ.
Meanwhile, our vessel nears the strand;
Launch we the boat, and seek the land."

XVIII.

To land King Robert lightly sprung,
And thrice aloud his bugle rung
With note prolong'd and varied strain,
Till bold Ben-Ghoil replied again.
Good Douglas then, and De la Haye,
Had in a glen a hart at bay,
And Lennox cheer'd the laggard hounds,
When waked that horn the greenwood bounds.
"It is the foe!" cried Boyd, who came
In breathless haste with eye of flame,—
"It is the foe!—Each valiant lord
Fling by his bow, and grasp his sword!"—
"Not so," replied the good Lord James,
"That blast no English bugle claims.
Oft have I heard it fire the fight,
Cheer the pursuit or stop the flight.
Dead were my heart, and deaf mine ear,
If Bruce should call, nor Douglas hear!
Each to Loch Ranza's margin spring;
That blast was winded by the King!" *

XIX.

Fast to their mates the tidings spread,
And fast to the shore the warriors sped.
Bursting from glen and greenwood tree,
High waked their loyal jubilee!
Around the royal Bruce they crowd,
And clasp'd his hands, and wept aloud.
Veterans of early fields were there,
Whose helmets press'd their hoary hair,
Whose swords and axes bore a stain
From life-blood of the red-hair'd Dane;
And boys, whose hands scarce brook'd to wield
The heavy sword or bossy shield.
Men too were there, that bore the scars
Impress'd in Albyn's woeful wars,
At Falkirk's fierce and fatal fight,
Teyndrum's dread rout, and Methven's flight;
The might of Douglas there was seen,
There Lennox with his graceful mien;
Kirkpatrick, Closeburn's dreaded Knight;
The Lindsay, fiery, fierce, and light;
He Heir of murder'd De la Haye,
And Boyd the grave, and Seton gay.
Around their King regain'd they press'd,
Wept, shouted, clasp'd him to their breast,
And young and old, and serf and lord,
And he who ne'er unsheathed a sword,
And he in many a peril tried,
Alike resolved the brunt to bide,
And live or die by Bruce's side!

XX.

Oh, War! thou hast thy fierce delight,
Thy gleams of joy, intensely bright!
Such gleams, as from thy polish'd shield
Fly dazzling o'er the battle-field!
Such transports wake, severe and high,
Amid the pealing conquest-cry;
Scarce less, when, after battle lost,
Muster the remnants of a host,
And as each comrade's name they tell,
Who in the well-fought conflict fell,
Knitting stern brow o'er flashing eye,
Vow to avenge them or to die!—
Warriors!—and where are warriors found,
If not on martial Britain's ground?
And who, when waked with note of fire,
Love more than they the British lyre?—
Know ye not,—hearts to honour dear!
That joy, deep-thrilling, stern, severe,
At which the heartstrings vibrate high,
And wake the fountains of the eye?
And blame ye, then, the Bruce, if trace
Of tear is on his manly face,
When, scanty relics of the train
That hail'd at Scone his early reign,
This patriot band around him hung,
And to his knees and bosom clung?—
Blame ye the Bruce?—His brother blamed,
But shared the weakness, while ashamed,
With haughty laugh his head he turn'd,
And dash'd away the tear he scorn'd.*

XXI.

'Tis morning, and the Convent bell
Long time had ceased its matin knell,
Within thy walls, Saint Bride!
An aged Sister sought the cell
Assign'd to Lady Isabel,
And hurriedly she cried,
"Haste, gentle Lady, haste!—there waits
A noble stranger at the gates;

Saint Bride's poor vot'ress ne'er has seen
A Knight of such a princely mien;
His errand, as he bade me tell,
Is with the Lady Isabel."
The princess rose,—for on her knee
Low bent she told her rosary,—
"Let him by thee his purpose teach;
I may not give a stranger speech."—
"Saint Bride forfend, thou Royal Maid!"
The portress cross'd herself, and said;—
"Not to be Prioress might I
Debate his will, his suit deny."—
"Has earthly show, then, simple fool,
Power o'er a sister of thy rule?
And art thou, like the worldly train,
Subdued by splendours light and vain?"—

XXII.

"No, Lady! in old eyes like mine,
Gauds have no glitter, gems no shine;
Nor grace his rank attendants vain,
One youthful page is all his train.
It is the form, the eye, the word,
The bearing of that stranger Lord;
His stature, manly, bold, and tall,
Built like a castle's battled wall,
Yet moulded in such just degrees,
His giant-strength seems lightsome ease.
Close as the tendrils of the vine,
His locks upon his forehead twine,
Jet-black, save where some touch of grey
Has ta'en the youthful hue away.
Weather and war their rougher trace
Have left on that majestic face;—
But 'tis his dignity of eye!
There, if a suppliant, would I fly,
Secure, 'mid danger, wrongs, and grief,
Of sympathy, redress, relief—
That glance, if guilty, would I dread
More than the doom that spoke me dead!"—
"Enough, enough," the Princess cried,
"'Tis Scotland's hope, her joy, her pride!
To meaner front was ne'er assign'd
Such mastery o'er the common mind—
Bestow'd thy high designs to aid,
How long, O Heaven! how long delay'd!—
Haste, Mona, haste, to introduce
My darling brother, royal Bruce!"

XXIII.

They met like friends who part in pain,
And meet in doubtful hope again.
But when subdued that fitful swell,
The Bruce surveyed the humble cell;—
"And this is thine, poor Isabel!—
That pallet-couch, and naked wall,
For room of state, and bed of pall;
For costly robes and jewels rare,
A string of beads and zone of hair;
And for the trumpet's sprightly call
To sport or banquet, grove or hall,
The bell's grim voice divides thy care,
'Twixt hours of penitence and prayer!—
O ill for thee, my royal claim
From the First David's sainted name!
O woe for thee, that while he sought
His right, thy brother feebly fought!"—

XXIV.

"Now lay these vain regrets aside,
And be the unshaken Bruce!" she cried.
"For more I glory to have shared
The woes thy venturous spirit dared,
When raising first thy valiant band
In rescue of thy native land,
Than had fair Fortune set me down
The partner of an empire's crown.
And grieve not that on Pleasure's stream
No more I drive in giddy dream,
For Heaven the erring pilot knew,
And from the gulf the vessel drew,
Tried me with judgments stern and great,
My house's ruin, thy defeat,
Poor Nigel's death—till, tamed, I own,
My hopes are fix'd on Heaven alone;
Nor e'er shall earthly prospects win
My heart to this vain world of sin."—

XXV.

"Nay, Isabel, for such stern choice,
First wilt thou wait thy brother's voice;
Then ponder if in convent scene
No softer thoughts might intervene—
Say they were of that unknown Knight,
Victor in Woodstock's tourney-fight—
Nay, if his name such blush you owe,
Victorious o'er a fairer foe!"
Truly his penetrating eye
Hath caught that blush's passing dye,—
Like the last beam of evening thrown
On a white cloud,—just seen and gone.
Soon with calm cheek and steady eye,
The Princess made composed reply:—
"I guess my brother's meaning well;
For not so silent is the cell,
But we have heard the islesmen all
Arm in thy cause at Ronald's call,
And mine eye proves that Knight unknown
And the brave Island Lord are one.—
Had then his suit been earlier made,
In his own name, with thee to aid
(But that his plighted faith forbade),
I know not . . . But thy page so near?—
This is no tale for menial's ear."

XXVI.

Still stood that page, as far apart
As the small cell would space afford;
With dizzy eye and bursting heart,
He leant his weight on Bruce's sword,
The monarch's mantle too he bore,
And drew the fold his visage o'er.

"Fear not for him—in murderous strife,"
Said Bruce, "his warning saved my life;
Full seldom parts he from my side,
And in his silence I confide,
Since he can tell no tale again.
He is a boy of gentle strain,
And I have purposed he shall dwell
In Augustine the chaplain's cell,
And wait on thee, my Isabel.—
Mind not his tears; I've seen them flow,
As in the thaw dissolves the snow.
'Tis a kind youth, but fanciful,
Unfit against the tide to pull,
And those that with the Bruce would sail,
Must learn to strive with stream and gale.—
But forward, gentle Isabel—
My answer for Lord Ronald tell."—

XXVII.

"This answer be to Ronald given—
The heart he asks is fix'd on heaven.
My love was like a summer flower,
That wither'd in the wintry hour,
Born but of vanity and pride,
And with these sunny visions died.
If further press his suit—then say,
He should his plighted troth obey,
Troth plighted both with ring and word,
And sworn on crucifix and sword.—
Oh, shame thee, Robert! I have seen
Thou hast a woman's guardian been!
Even in extremity's dread hour,
When press'd on thee the Southern power,
And safety, to all human sight,
Was only found in rapid flight,
Thou heard'st a wretched female plain
In agony of travail-pain,
And thou didst bid thy little band
Upon the instant turn and stand,
And dare the worst the foe might do,
Rather than, like a knight untrue,
Leave to pursuers merciless,
A woman in her last distress.*
And wilt thou now deny thine aid
To an oppress'd and injured maid,
Even plead for Ronald's perfidy,
And press his fickle faith on me?—
So witness Heaven, as true I vow,
Had I those earthly feelings now,
Which could my former bosom move
Ere taught to set its hopes above,
I'd spurn each proffer he could bring,
Till at my feet he laid the ring,
The ring and spousal contract both,
And fair acquittal of his oath,
By her who brooks his perjured scorn,
The ill-requited Maid of Lorn!"

XXVIII.

With sudden impulse forward sprung
The page, and on her neck he hung;
Then, recollected instantly,
His head he stoop'd, and bent his knee,
Kiss'd twice the hand of Isabel,
Arose, and sudden left the cell.—
The Princess, loosen'd from his hold,
Blush'd angry at his bearing bold;
But good King Robert cried,
"Chafe not—by signs he speaks his mind,
He heard the plan my care design'd,
Nor could his transports hide.—
But, sister, now bethink thee well:
No easy choice the convent cell;
Trust, I shall play no tyrant part,
Either to force thy hand or heart,
Or suffer that Lord Ronald scorn,
Or wrong for thee, the Maid of Lorn.
But think,—not long the time has been,
That thou wert wont to sigh unseen,
And wouldst the ditties best approve
That told some lay of hapless love.
Now are thy wishes in thy power,
And thou art bent on cloister bower!
O! if our Edward knew the change,
How would his busy satire range,
With many a sarcasm varied still
On woman's wish, and woman's will!"—

XXIX.

"Brother, I well believe," she said,
"Even so would Edward's part be play'd.
Kindly in heart, in word severe,
A foe to thought, and grief, and fear,
He holds his humour uncontroll'd;
But thou art of another mould.
Say then to Ronald, as I say,
Unless before my feet he lay
The ring which bound the faith he swore,
By Edith freely yielded o'er,
He moves his suit to me no more.
Nor do I promise, even if now
He stood absolved of spousal vow,
That I would change my purpose made,
To shelter me in holy shade.—
Brother, for little space, farewell!
To other duties warns the bell."—

XXX.

"Lost to the world," King Robert said,
When he had left the royal maid,
"Lost to the world by lot severe,
O what a gem lies buried here,
Nipp'd by misfortune's cruel frost,
The buds of fair affection lost!—
But what have I with love to do?
Far sterner cares my lot pursue.
—Pent in this isle we may not lie,
Nor would it long our wants supply.
Right opposite, the mainland towers
Of my own Turnberry court our powers—
—Might not my father's beadsman hoar,
Cuthbert, who dwells upon the shore,

Kindle a signal-flame, to show
The time propitious for the blow?
It shall be so—some friend shall bear
Our mandate with despatch and care;
—Edward shall find the messenger.
That fortress ours, the island fleet
May on the coast of Carrick meet.—
O Scotland! shall it e'er be mine
To wreak thy wrongs in battle-line,
To raise my victor-head, and see
Thy hills, thy dales, thy people free,—
That glance of bliss is all I crave,
Betwixt my labours and my grave!"
Then down the hill he slowly went,
Oft pausing on the steep descent,
And reach'd the spot where his bold train
Held rustic camp upon the plain.

CANTO FIFTH.

I.

On fair Loch-Ranza stream'd the early day,
Thin wreaths of cottage-smoke are upward curl'd
From the lone hamlet, which her inland bay
And circling mountains sever from the world.
And there the fisherman his sail unfurl'd,
The goat-herd drove his kids to steep Ben-Ghoil,
Before the hut the dame her spindle twirl'd,
Courting the sunbeam as she plied her toil,—
For, wake where'er he may, Man wakes to care and toil.

But other duties call'd each convent maid,
Roused by the summons of the moss-grown bell;
Sung were the matins, and the mass was said,
And every sister sought her separate cell,
Such was the rule, her rosary to tell.
And Isabel has knelt in lonely prayer;
The sunbeam, through the narrow lattice, fell
Upon the snowy neck and long dark hair,
As stoop'd her gentle head in meek devotion there.

II.

She raised her eyes, that duty done,
When glanced upon the pavement-stone,
Gemm'd and enchased, a golden ring,
Bound to a scroll with silken string,
With few brief words inscribed to tell,
"This for the Lady Isabel."
Within, the writing further bore,—
"'Twas with this ring his plight he swore,
With this his promise I restore;
To her who can the heart command,
Well may I yield the plighted hand.
And O! for better fortune born,
Grudge not a passing sigh to mourn
Her who was Edith once of Lorn!"
One single flash of glad surprise
Just glanced from Isabel's dark eyes,
But vanish'd in the blush of shame,
That, as its penance, instant came.
"O thought unworthy of my race!
Selfish, ungenerous, mean, and base,
A moment's throb of joy to own,
That rose upon her hopes o'erthrown!—
Thou pledge of vows too well believed,
Of man ingrate, and maid deceived,
Think not thy lustre here shall gain
Another heart to hope in vain!
For thou shalt rest, thou tempting gaud,
Where worldly thoughts are overawed,
And worldly splendours sink debased."
Then by the cross the ring she placed.

III.

Next rose the thought,—its owner far,
How came it here through bolt and bar?—
But the dim lattice is ajar,—
She looks abroad,—the morning dew
A light short step had brush'd anew,
And there were footprints seen
On the carved buttress rising still,
Till on the mossy window-sill
Their track effaced the green.
The ivy-twigs were torn and fray'd,
As if some climber's steps to aid.—
But who the hardy messenger,
Whose venturous path these signs infer?—
"Strange doubts are mine!—Mona, draw nigh;
—Nought 'scapes old Mona's curious eye—
What strangers, gentle mother, say,
Have sought these holy walls to-day?"—
"None, Lady, none of note or name;
Only your brother's foot-page came,
At peep of dawn—I pray'd him pass
To chapel where they said the mass;
But like an arrow he shot by,
And tears seem'd bursting from his eye."

IV.

The truth at once on Isabel,
As darted by a sunbeam, fell:—
"'Tis Edith's self!—her speechless woe,
Her form, her looks, the secret show!
—Instant, good Mona, to the bay,
And to my royal brother say,
I do conjure him seek my cell,
With that mute page he loves so well."—
"What! know'st thou not his warlike host
At break of day has left our coast?
My old eyes saw them from the tower.
At eve they couch'd in greenwood bower,
At dawn a bugle signal, made
By their bold Lord, their ranks array'd;

Up sprung the spears through bush and tree,
No time for benedicite!
Like deer, that, rousing from their lair,
Just shake the dewdrops from their hair,
And toss their armèd crests aloft,
Such matins theirs!"—"Good mother, soft—
Where does my brother bend his way?"—
"As I have heard, for Brodick-Bay,
Across the isle—of barks a score
Lie there, 'tis said, to waft them o'er,
On sudden news, to Carrick-shore."—
"If such their purpose, deep the need,"
Said anxious Isabel, "of speed!
Call Father Augustine, good dame."—
The nun obey'd, the Father came.

V.

"Kind Father, hie without delay,
Across the hills to Brodick-Bay.
This message to the Bruce be given:
I pray him, by his hopes of Heaven,
That, till he speak with me, he stay!
Or, if his haste brook no delay,
That he deliver, on my suit,
Into thy charge that stripling mute.
Thus prays his sister Isabel,
For causes more than she may tell—
Away, good father! and take heed
That life and death are on thy speed."
His cowl the good old priest did on,
Took his piked staff and sandall'd shoon,
And, like a palmer bent by eld,
O'er moss and moor his journey held.

VI.

Heavy and dull the foot of age,
And rugged was the pilgrimage;
But none was there beside, whose care
Might such important message bear.
Through birchen copse he wander'd slow,
Stunted and sapless, thin and low;
By many a mountain stream he pass'd,
From the tall cliffs in tumult cast,
Dashing to foam their waters dun,
And sparkling in the summer sun.
Round his grey head the wild curlew
In many a fearless circle flew. [wide
O'er chasms he pass'd, where fractures
Craved wary eye and ample stride;*
He cross'd his brow beside the stone
Where Druids erst heard victims groan,
And at the cairns upon the wild,
O'er many a heathen hero piled,
He breathed a timid prayer for those
Who died ere Shiloh's sun arose.
Beside Macfarlane's Cross he staid,
There told his hours within the shade,
And at the stream his thirst allay'd.
Thence onward journeying slowly still,
As evening closed he reach'd the hill,
Where, rising through the woodland green,
Old Brodick's Gothic towers were seen,
From Hastings, late their English lord,
Douglas had won them by the sword.*
The sun that sunk behind the isle,
Now tinged them with a parting smile.

VII.

But though the beams of light decay,
'Twas bustle all in Brodick-Bay.
The Bruce's followers crowd the shore,
And boats and barges some unmoor,
Some raise the sail, some seize the oar;
Their eyes oft turn'd where glimmer'd far
What might have seem'd an early star
On heaven's blue arch, save that its light
Was all too flickering, fierce, and bright.
Far distant in the south, the ray
Shone pale amid retiring day,
But as, on Carrick shore,
Dim seen in outline faintly blue,
The shades of evening closer drew,
It kindled more and more.
The Monk's slow steps now press the sands,
And now amid a scene he stands,
Full strange to churchman's eye;
Warriors, who, arming for the fight,
Rivet and clasp their harness light,
And twinkling spears, and axes bright,
And helmets flashing high.
Oft, too, with unaccustom'd ears,
A language much unmeet he hears,*
While, hastening all on board,
As stormy as the swelling surge
That mix'd its roar, the leaders urge
Their followers to the ocean verge,
With many a haughty word.

VIII.

Through that wild throng the Father pass'd,
And reach'd the Royal Bruce at last.
He leant against a stranded boat,
That the approaching tide must float,
And counted every rippling wave,
As higher yet her sides they lave,
And oft the distant fire he eyed,
And closer yet his hauberk tied,
And loosen'd in its sheath his brand.
Edward and Lennox were at hand,
Douglas and Ronald had the care
The soldiers to the barks to share.—
The Monk approach'd, and homage paid;
"And art thou come," King Robert said,
"So far, to bless us ere we part?"—
—"My Liege, and with a loyal heart!—
But other charge I have to tell,"—
And spoke the hest of Isabel. [cried,
—"Now, by Saint Giles," the Monarch
"This moves me much!—this morning
I sent the stripling to Saint Bride, [tide,
With my commandment there to bide."—
—"Thither he came, the portress show'd,
But there, my Liege, made brief abode."—

IX.

"'Twas I," said Edward, "found employ
Of nobler import for the boy.
Deep pondering in my anxious mind,
A fitting messenger to find,
To bear thy written mandate o'er
To Cuthbert on the Carrick shore,
I chanced, at early dawn, to pass
The chapel gate to snatch a mass.
I found the stripling on a tomb
Low-seated, weeping for the doom
That gave his youth to convent gloom.
I told my purpose, and his eyes
Flash'd joyful at the glad surprise.
He bounded to the skiff, the sail
Was spread before a prosperous gale,
And well my charge he hath obey'd;
For, see! the ruddy signal made,
That Clifford, with his merry-men all,
Guards carelessly our father's hall."—

X.

"O wild of thought, and hard of heart!"
Answer'd the Monarch, "on a part
Of such deep danger to employ
A mute, an orphan, and a boy!
Unfit for flight, unfit for strife,
Without a tongue to plead for life!
Now, were my right restored by Heaven,
Edward, my crown I would have given,
Ere, thrust on such adventure wild,
I perill'd thus the helpless child."—
—Offended half, and half submiss,—
"Brother and Liege, of blame like this,"
Edward replied, "I little dream'd.
A stranger messenger, I deem'd,
Might safest seek the beadsman's cell,
Where all thy squires are known so well.
Noteless his presence, sharp his sense,
His imperfection his defence.
If seen, none can his errand guess;
If ta'en, his words no tale express—
Methinks, too, yonder beacon's shine
Might expiate greater fault than mine."—
"Rash," said King Robert, "was the deed—
But it is done.—Embark with speed!—
Good Father, say to Isabel
How this unhappy chance befell;
If well we thrive on yonder shore,
Soon shall my care her page restore.
Our greeting to our sister bear,
And think of us in mass and prayer."—

XI.

"Ay!" said the Priest,—"while this poor hand
Can chalice raise or cross command,
While my old voice has accents' use,
Can Augustine forget the Bruce?"
Then to his side Lord Ronald press'd,
And whisper'd—"Bear thou this request,
That when by Bruce's side I fight,
For Scotland's crown and freedom's right,
The princess grace her knight to bear
Some token of her favouring care;
It shall be shown where England best
May shrink to see it on my crest.
And for the boy—since weightier care
For royal Bruce the times prepare,
The helpless youth is Ronald's charge,
His couch my plaid, his fence my targe."
He ceased; for many an eager hand
Had urged the barges from the strand.
Their number was a score and ten,
They bore thrice threescore chosen men.
With such small force did Bruce at last
The die for death or empire cast!

XII.

Now on the darkening main afloat,
Ready and mann'd, rocks every boat;
Beneath their oars the ocean's might
Was dash'd to sparks of glimmering light.
Faint and more faint, as off they bore,
Their armour glanced against the shore,
And, mingled with the dashing tide,
Their murmuring voices distant died.—
"God speed them!" said the Priest, as dark
On distant billows glides each bark;
"O Heaven! when swords for freedom shine,
And monarch's right, the cause is thine!
Edge doubly every patriot blow!
Beat down the banners of the foe!
And be it to the nations known,
That Victory is from God alone!"
As up the hill his path he drew,
He turn'd, his blessings to renew,
Oft turn'd, till on the darken'd coast
All traces of their course were lost;
Then slowly bent to Brodick tower,
To shelter for the evening hour.

XIII.

In night the fairy prospects sink,
Where Cumray's isles with verdant link
Close the fair entrance of the Clyde;
The woods of Bute, no more descried,
Are gone—and on the placid sea
The rowers ply their task with glee,
While hands that knightly lances bore
Impatient aid the labouring oar.
The half-faced moon shone dim and pale,
And glanced against the whiten'd sail;
But on that ruddy beacon-light
Each steersman kept the helm aright,
And oft, for such the King's command,
That all at once might reach the strand,
From boat to boat loud shout and hail
Warn'd them to crowd or slacken sail.
South and by west the armada bore,
And near at length the Carrick shore.

As less and less the distance grows,
High and more high the beacon rose;
The light, that seem'd a twinkling star,
Now blazed portentous, fierce, and far.
Dark-red the heaven above it glow'd,
Dark-red the sea beneath it flow'd,
Red rose the rocks on ocean's brim,
In blood-red light her islets swim;
Wild scream the dazzled sea-fowl gave,
Dropp'd from their crags on plashing wave.
The deer to distant covert drew,
The black-cock deem'd it day, and crew.
Like some tall castle given to flame,
O'er half the land the lustre came.
"Now, good my Liege, and brother sage,
What think ye of mine elfin page?"—
"Row on!" the noble King replied;
"We'll learn the truth, whate'er betide;
Yet sure the beadsman and the child
Could ne'er have waked that beacon wild."

XIV.

With that the boats approach'd the land,
But Edward's grounded on the sand;
The eager Knight leap'd in the sea
Waist-deep, and first on shore was he,
Though every barge's hardy band
Contended which should gain the land,
When that strange light, which, seen afar,
Seem'd steady as the polar star,
Now, like a prophet's fiery chair,
Seem'd travelling the realms of air.
Wide o'er the sky the splendour glows,
As that portentous meteor rose;
Helm, axe, and falchion glitter'd bright,
And in the red and dusky light
His comrade's face each warrior saw,
Nor marvell'd it was pale with awe;
Then high in air the beams were lost,
And darkness sunk upon the coast.—
Ronald to Heaven a prayer address'd,
And Douglas cross'd his dauntless breast;
"Saint James protect us!" Lennox cried;
But reckless Edward spoke aside—
"Deem'st thou, Kirkpatrick, in that flame
Red Comyn's angry spirit came,
Or would thy dauntless heart endure
Once more to make assurance sure?"—
"Hush!" said the Bruce, "we soon shall know,
If this be sorcerer's empty show,
If this be stratagem of southern foe.
The moon shines out—upon the sand
Let every leader rank his band."

XV.

Faintly the moon's pale beams supply
That ruddy light's unnatural dye;
The dubious cold reflection lay
On the wet sands and quiet bay.
Beneath the rocks King Robert drew
His scatter'd files to order due,
Till shield compact and serried spear
In the cool light shone blue and clear.
Then down a path that sought the tide,
That speechless page was seen to glide;
He knelt him lowly on the sand,
And gave a scroll to Robert's hand. [ho!
"A torch," the Monarch cried—"What,
Now shall we Cuthbert's tidings know."
But evil news the letters bare,
The Clifford's force was strong and ware,
Augmented, too, that very morn,
By mountaineers who came with Lorn.
Long harrow'd by oppressor's hand,
Courage and faith had fled the land,
And over Carrick, dark and deep,
Had sunk dejection's iron sleep.—
Cuthbert had seen that beacon-flame,
Unwitting from what source it came.
Doubtful of perilous event,
Edward's mute messenger he sent,
If Bruce deceived should venture o'er,
To warn him from the fatal shore.

XVI.

As round the torch the leaders crowd,
Bruce read these chilling news aloud.
"What counsel, nobles, have we now?—
To ambush us in greenwood bough,
And take the chance which fate may send
To bring our enterprise to end?
Or shall we turn us to the main
As exiles, and embark again?"—
Answer'd fierce Edward—"Hap what may,
In Carrick, Carrick's Lord must stay.
I would not minstrels told the tale,
Wildfire or meteor made us quail."—
Answer'd the Douglas—"If my Liege
May win yon walls by storm or siege,
Then were each brave and patriot heart
Kindled of new for loyal part."—
Answer'd Lord Ronald—"Not for shame
Would I that agèd Torquil came,
And found, for all our empty boast,
Without a blow we fled the coast.
I will not credit that this land,
So famed for warlike heart and hand,
The nurse of Wallace and of Bruce,
Will long with tyrants hold a truce."—
"Prove we our fate—the brunt we'll bide!"
So Boyd and Haye and Lennox cried;
So said, so vow'd, the leaders all;
So Bruce resolved:—"And in my hall
Since the Bold Southern make their home,
The hour of payment soon shall come,
When with a rough and rugged host
Clifford may reckon to his cost.
Meantime, through well-known bosk and dell,
I'll lead where we may shelter well."

XVII.

Now ask you whence that wondrous light,
Whose fairy glow beguiled their sight?—
It ne'er was known*—yet grey-hair'd eld
A superstitious credence held,
That never did a mortal hand
Wake its broad glare on Carrick strand;
Nay, and that on the self-same night
When Bruce cross'd o'er, still gleams the light.
Yearly it gleams o'er mount and moor,
And glittering wave and crimson'd shore—
But whether beam celestial, lent
By Heaven to aid the King's descent,
Or fire hell-kindled from beneath,
To lure him to defeat and death,
Or were it but some meteor strange,
Of such as oft through midnight range,
Startling the traveller late and lone,
I know not—and it ne'er was known.

XVIII.

Now up the rocky pass they drew,
And Ronald, to his promise true,
Still made his arm the stripling's stay,
To aid him on the rugged way.
"Now cheer thee, simple Amadine!
Why throbs that silly heart of thine?"—
—That name the pirates to their slave
(In Gaelic 'tis the Changeling) gave—
"Dost thou not rest thee on my arm?
Do not my plaid-folds hold thee warm?
Hath not the wild bull's treble hide
This targe for thee and me supplied?
Is not Clan-Colla's sword of steel?
And, trembler, canst thou terror feel?
Cheer thee, and still that throbbing heart;
From Ronald's guard thou shalt not part."
—O! many a shaft, at random sent,
Finds mark the archer little meant!
And many a word, at random spoken,
May soothe or wound a heart that's broken!
Half soothed, half grieved, half terrified,
Close drew the page to Ronald's side;
A wild delirious thrill of joy
Was in that hour of agony,
As up the steepy pass he strove,
Fear, toil, and sorrow, lost in love!

XIX.

The barrier of that iron shore, [o'er;
The rock's steep ledge, is now climb'd
And from the castle's distant wall,
From tower to tower the warders call:
The sound swings over land and sea,
And marks a watchful enemy.—
They gain'd the Chase, a wide domain
Left for the castle's sylvan reign
(Seek not the scene—the axe, the plough,
The boor's dull fence, have marr'd it now),
But then, soft swept in velvet green
The plain with many a glade between,
Whose tangled alleys far invade
The depth of the brown forest shade.
Here the tall fern obscured the lawn,
Fair shelter for the sportive fawn;
There, tufted close with copsewood green,
Was many a swelling hillock seen;
And all around was verdure meet
For pressure of the fairies' feet.
The glossy holly loved the park,
The yew-tree lent its shadow dark,
And many an old oak, worn and bare,
With all its shiver'd boughs, was there.
Lovely between, the moonbeams fell
On lawn and hillock, glade and dell.
The gallant Monarch sigh'd to see
These glades so loved in childhood free,
Bethinking that, as outlaw now,
He ranged beneath the forest bough.

XX.

Fast o'er the moonlight Chase they sped.
Well knew the band that measured tread,
When, in retreat or in advance,
The serried warriors move at once;
And evil were the luck, if dawn
Descried them on the open lawn.
Copses they traverse, brooks they cross,
Strain up the bank and o'er the moss.
From the exhausted page's brow
Cold drops of toil are streaming now;
With effort faint and lengthen'd pause,
His weary step the stripling draws.
"Nay, droop not yet!" the warrior said,
"Come, let me give thee ease and aid!
Strong are mine arms, and little care
A weight so slight as thine to bear,—
What! wilt thou not?—capricious boy!
Then thine own limbs and strength employ.
Pass but this night, and pass thy care,
I'll place thee with a lady fair,
Where thou shalt tune thy lute to tell
How Ronald loves fair Isabel!"
Worn out, dishearten'd, and dismay'd,
Here Amadine let go the plaid;
His trembling limbs their aid refuse,
He sunk among the midnight dews!

XXI.

What may be done?—the night is gone—
The Bruce's band moves swiftly on—
Eternal shame, if at the brunt
Lord Ronald grace not battle's front!—
"See yonder oak, within whose trunk
Decay a darken'd cell hath sunk;
Enter, and rest thee there a space,
Wrap in my plaid thy limbs, thy face.
I will not be, believe me, far;
But must not quit the ranks of war.
Well will I mark the bosky bourne,
And soon, to guard thee hence, return.—

Nay, weep not so, thou simple boy!
But sleep in peace, and wake in joy."
In sylvan lodging close bestow'd,
He placed the page, and onward strode,
With strength put forth, o'er moss and brook,
And soon the marching band o'ertook.

XXII.

Thus strangely left, long sobb'd and wept
The page, till, wearied out, he slept—
A rough voice waked his dream—"Nay, here,
Here by this thicket, pass'd the deer—
Beneath that oak old Ryno staid—
What have we here?—a Scottish plaid,
And in its folds a stripling laid?—
Come forth! thy name and business tell!—
What, silent?—then I guess thee well,
The spy that sought old Cuthbert's cell,
Wafted from Arran yester morn—
Come, comrades, we will straight return.
Our Lord may choose the rack should
To this young lurcher use of speech. [teach
Thy bow-string, till I bind him fast."—
"Nay, but he weeps and stands aghast;
Unbound we'll lead him, fear it not;
'Tis a fair stripling, though a Scot."
The hunters to the castle sped,
And there the hapless captive led.

XXIII.

Stout Clifford in the castle-court
Prepared him for the morning sport;
And now with Lorn held deep discourse,
Now gave command for hound and horse.
War-steeds and palfreys paw'd the ground,
And many a deer-dog howl'd around.
To Amadine, Lorn's well-known word
Replying to that Southern Lord,
Mix'd with this clanging din, might seem
The phantasm of a fever'd dream.
The tone upon his ringing ears
Came like the sounds which fancy hears,
When in rude waves or roaring winds
Some words of woe the muser finds,
Until more loudly and more near,
Their speech arrests the page's ear.

XXIV.

"And was she thus," said Clifford, "lost?
The priest should rue it to his cost!
What says the monk?"—"The holy Sire
Owns, that in masquer's quaint attire
She sought his skiff, disguised, unknown
To all except to him alone.
But, says the priest, a bark from Lorn
Laid them aboard that very morn,
And pirates seized her for their prey.
He proffer'd ransom-gold to pay,
And they agreed—but ere told o'er,
The winds blow loud, the billows roar;
They sever'd, and they met no more.
He deems—such tempest vex'd the coast—
Ship, crew, and fugitive were lost.
So let it be, with the disgrace
And scandal of her lofty race!
Thrice better she had ne'er been born,
Than brought her infamy on Lorn!"

XXV.

Lord Clifford now the captive spied;—
"Whom, Herbert, hast thou there?" he cried.
"A spy we seized within the Chase,
A hollow oak his lurking-place."—
"What tidings can the youth afford?"—
"He plays the mute."—"Then noose a cord—
Unless brave Lorn reverse the doom
For his plaid's sake."—"Clan-Colla's loom,"
Said Lorn, whose careless glances trace
Rather the vesture than the face,
"Clan-Colla's dames such tartans twine;
Wearer nor plaid claims care of mine.
Give him, if my advice you crave,
His own scathed oak; and let him wave
In air, unless, by terror wrung,
A frank confession find his tongue.—
Nor shall he die without his rite;
—Thou, Angus Roy, attend the sight,
And give Clan-Colla's dirge thy breath,
As they convey him to his death."—
"O brother! cruel to the last!"
Through the poor captive's bosom pass'd
The thought, but, to his purpose true,
He said not, though he sigh'd, "Adieu!"

XXVI.

And will he keep his purpose still,
In sight of that last closing ill,
When one poor breath, one single word,
May freedom, safety, life afford?
Can he resist the instinctive call,
For life that bids us barter all?—[steel'd,
Love, strong as death, his heart hath
His nerves hath strung—he will not yield!
Since that poor breath, that little word,
May yield Lord Ronald to the sword.—
Clan-Colla's dirge is pealing wide,
The grisly headsman's by his side;
Along the greenwood Chase they bend,
And now their march has ghastly end!
That old and shatter'd oak beneath,
They destine for the place of death.
—What thoughts are his, while all in
His eye for aid explores the plain? [vain
What thoughts, while, with a dizzy ear,
He hears the death-prayer mutter'd near?
And must he die such death accurst,
Or will that bosom-secret burst?
Cold on his brow breaks terror's dew,
His trembling lips are livid blue;
The agony of parting life
Has nought to match that moment's strife!

XXVII.

But other witnesses are nigh,
Who mock at fear, and death defy!
Soon as the dire lament was play'd,
It waked the lurking ambuscade.
The Island Lord look'd forth, and spied
The cause, and loud in fury cried,—
"By Heaven, they lead the page to die,
And mock me in his agony!
They shall abye it!"—On his arm
Bruce laid strong grasp—"They shall not harm
A ringlet of the stripling's hair;
But, till I give the word, forbear.
—Douglas, lead fifty of our force
Up yonder hollow water-course,
And couch thee midway on the wold,
Between the flyers and their hold:
A spear above the copse display'd,
Be signal of the ambush made.
—Edward, with forty spearmen, straight
Through yonder copse approach the gate,
And, when thou hear'st the battle-din,
Rush forward, and the passage win,
Secure the drawbridge—storm the port,
And man and guard the castle-court.—
The rest move slowly forth with me,
In shelter of the forest-tree,
Till Douglas at his post I see."

XXVIII.

Like war-horse eager to rush on,
Compell'd to wait the signal blown,
Hid, and scarce hid, by greenwood bough,
Trembling with rage, stands Ronald now,
And in his grasp his sword gleams blue,
Soon to be dyed with deadlier hue.—
Meanwhile the Bruce, with steady eye,
Sees the dark death-train moving by,
And, heedful, measures oft the space
The Douglas and his band must trace,
Ere they can reach their destined ground.
Now sinks the dirge's wailing sound,
Now cluster round the direful tree
That slow and solemn company, [prayer
While hymn mistuned and mutter'd
The victim for his fate prepare.—
What glances o'er the greenwood shade?
The spear that marks the ambuscade!—
"Now, noble Chief! I leave thee loose;—
Upon them, Ronald!" said the Bruce.

XXIX.

"The Bruce! the Bruce!" to well-known cry
His native rocks and woods reply.
"The Bruce! the Bruce!" in that dread word
The knell of hundred deaths was heard.
The astonish'd Southern gazed at first,
Where the wild tempest was to burst,
That waked in that presaging name.
Before, behind, around it came!
Half-arm'd, surprised, on every side
Hemm'd in, hew'd down, they bled and died.
Deep in the ring the Bruce engaged,
And fierce Clan-Colla's broadsword raged!
Full soon the few who fought were sped,
Nor better was their lot who fled,
And met, 'mid terror's wild career,
The Douglas's redoubted spear!
Two hundred yeomen on that morn
The castle left, and none return.

XXX.

Not on their flight press'd Ronald's brand,
A gentler duty claim'd his hand.
He raised the page, where on the plain
His fear had sunk him with the slain:
And twice, that morn, surprise well near
Betray'd the secret kept by fear:
Once, when, with life returning, came
To the boy's lip Lord Ronald's name,
And hardly recollection drown'd
The accents in a murmuring sound;
And once, when scarce he could resist
The Chieftain's care to loose the vest,
Drawn tightly o'er his labouring breast.
But then the Bruce's bugle blew,
For martial work was yet to do.

XXXI.

A harder task fierce Edward waits.
Ere signal given, the castle gates
His fury had assailed;
Such was his wonted reckless mood,
Yet desperate valour oft made good,
Even by its daring, venture rude,
Where prudence might have fail'd.
Upon the bridge his strength he threw,
And struck the iron chain in two,
By which its planks arose;
The warder next his axe's edge
Struck down upon the threshold ledge,
'Twixt door and post a ghastly wedge!
The gate they may not close.
Well fought the Southern in the fray,
Clifford and Lorn fought well that day,
But stubborn Edward forced his way
Against a hundred foes. [Bruce!"
Loud came the cry, "The Bruce! the
No hope or in defence or truce,—
Fresh combatants pour in;
Mad with success, and drunk with gore,
They drive the struggling foe before,
And ward on ward they win.
Unsparing was the vengeful sword,
And limbs were lopp'd and life-blood pour'd,
The cry of death and conflict roar'd,
And fearful was the din!
The startling horses plunged and flung,
Clamour'd the dogs till turrets rung,
Nor sunk the fearful cry,

Till not a foeman was there found
Alive, save those who on the ground
Groan'd in their agony!

XXXII.

The valiant Clifford is no more;
On Ronald's broadsword stream'd his gore.
But better hap had he of Lorn,
Who, by the foemen backward borne,
Yet gain'd with slender train the port,
Where lay his bark beneath the fort,
And cut the cable loose.
Short were his shrift in that debate,
That hour of fury and of fate,
If Lorn encounter'd Bruce!
Then long and loud the victor shout
From turret and from tower rung out,
The rugged vaults replied;
And from the donjon tower on high,
The men of Carrick may descry
Saint Andrew's cross, in blazonry
Of silver, waving wide!

XXXIII.

The Bruce hath won his father's hall!*
—"Welcome, brave friends and comrades all,
Welcome to mirth and joy!
The first, the last, is welcome here,
From lord and chieftain, prince and peer,
To this poor speechless boy.
Great God! once more my sire's abode
Is mine—behold the floor I trode
In tottering infancy!
And there the vaulted arch, whose sound
Echo'd my joyous shout and bound
In boyhood, and that rung around
To youth's unthinking glee!
O first, to thee, all-gracious Heaven,
Then to my friends, my thanks be given!"—
He paused a space, his brow he cross'd—
Then on the board his sword he toss'd,
Yet steaming hot; with Southern gore
From hilt to point 'twas crimson'd o'er.

XXXIV.

"Bring here," he said, "the mazers four,†
My noble fathers loved of yore.
Thrice let them circle round the board,
The pledge, fair Scotland's rights restored!
And he whose lip shall touch the wine,
Without a vow as true as mine,
To hold both lands and life at nought,
Until her freedom shall be bought,—
Be brand of a disloyal Scot,
And lasting infamy his lot!
Sit, gentle friends!—our hour of glee
Is brief, we'll spend it joyously!
Blithest of all the sun's bright beams,
When betwixt storm and storm he gleams.

† These *mazers* were large drinking-cups, or goblets.

Well is our country's work begun,
But more, far more, must yet be done.
Speed messengers the country through;
Arouse old friends, and gather new;
Warn Lanark's knights to gird their mail,
Rouse the brave sons of Teviotdale,
Let Ettrick's archers sharp their darts,
The fairest forms, the truest hearts!
Call all, call all! from Reedswair-Path,
To the wild confines of Cape-Wrath;
Wide let the news through Scotland ring,—
The Northern Eagle claps his wing!"

CANTO SIXTH.

I.

O WHO, that shared them, ever shall forget
The emotions of the spirit-rousing time,
When breathless in the mart the couriers met,
Early and late, at evening and at prime
When the loud cannon and the merry chime
Hail'd news on news, as field on field was won!
When Hope, long doubtful, soar'd at length sublime,
And our glad eyes, awake as day begun,
Watch'd Joy's broad banner rise, to meet the rising sun!

O these were hours, when thrilling joy repaid
A long, long course of darkness, doubts, and fears!
The heart-sick faintness of the hope delay'd,—
The waste, the woe, the bloodshed, and the tears,
That track'd with terror twenty rolling years,—
All was forgot in that blithe jubilee!
Her downcast eye even pale Affliction rears,
To sigh a thankful prayer, amid the glee
That hail'd the Despot's fall, and peace and liberty!

Such news o'er Scotland's hills triumphant rode,
When 'gainst the invaders turn'd the battle's scale,
When Bruce's banner had victorious flow'd
O'er Loudoun's mountain, and in Ury's vale;*
When English blood oft deluged Douglas-dale,*
And fiery Edward routed stout Saint John,*
When Randolph's war-cry swell'd the southern gale,*
And many a fortress, town, and tower was won,
And Fame still sounded forth fresh deeds of glory done.

II.

Blithe tidings flew from baron's tower,
To peasant's cot, to forest-bower,
And waked the solitary cell,
Where lone Saint Bride's recluses dwell.
Princess no more, fair Isabel,
A vot'ress of the order now,
Say, did the rule that bade thee wear
Dim veil and woollen scapulaire,
And reft thy locks of dark-brown hair,
That stern and rigid vow,
Did it condemn the transport high,
Which glisten'd in thy watery eye,
When minstrel or when palmer told
Each fresh exploit of Bruce the bold?—
And whose the lovely form, that shares
Thy anxious hopes, thy fears, thy prayers?
No sister she of convent shade;
So say these locks in lengthen'd braid,
So say the blushes and the sighs,
The tremors that unbidden rise,
When, mingled with the Bruce's fame,
The brave Lord Ronald's praises came.

III.

Believe, his father's castle won,
And his bold enterprise begun,
That Bruce's earliest cares restore
The speechless page to Arran's shore:
Nor think that long the quaint disguise
Conceal'd her from a sister's eyes;
And sister-like in love they dwell
In that lone convent's silent cell.
There Bruce's slow assent allows
Fair Isabel the veil and vows;
And there, her sex's dress regain'd,
The lovely Maid of Lorn remain'd,
Unnamed, unknown, while Scotland far
Resounded with the din of war;
And many a month, and many a day,
In calm seclusion wore away.

IV.

These days, these months, to years had worn,
When tidings of high weight were borne
To that lone island's shore;
Of all the Scottish conquests made
By the First Edward's ruthless blade,
His son retain'd no more,
Northward of Tweed, but Stirling's towers,
Beleaguer'd by King Robert's powers;
And they took term of truce,*
If England's King should not relieve
The siege ere John the Baptist's eve,
To yield them to the Bruce.
England was roused—on every side
Courier and post and herald hied,
To summon prince and peer,
At Berwick-bounds to meet their Liege,
Prepared to raise fair Stirling's siege,
With buckler, brand, and spear.
The term was nigh—they muster'd fast,
By beacon and by bugle-blast
Forth marshall'd for the field;
There rode each knight of noble name,
There England's hardy archers came,
The land they trode seem'd all on flame,
With banner, blade, and shield!
And not famed England's powers alone,
Renown'd in arms, the summons own;
For Neustria's knights obey'd,
Gascoyne hath lent her horsemen good,
And Cambria, but of late subdued,
Sent forth her mountain-multitude,*
And Connoght pour'd from waste and wood
Her hundred tribes, whose sceptre rude
Dark Eth O'Connor sway'd.*

V.

Right to devoted Caledon
The storm of war rolls slowly on,
With menace deep and dread;
So the dark clouds, with gathering power,
Suspend awhile the threaten'd shower,
Till every peak and summit lower
Round the pale pilgrim's head.
Not with such pilgrim's startled eye
King Robert mark'd the tempest nigh!
Resolved the brunt to bide,
His royal summons warn'd the land,
That all who own'd their King's command
Should instant take the spear and brand,
To combat at his side.
O who may tell the sons of fame,
That at King Robert's bidding came,
To battle for the right!
From Cheviot to the shores of Ross,
From Solway-Sands to Marshal's-Moss,
All boun'd them for the fight.
Such news the royal courier tells,
Who came to rouse dark Arran's dells;
But farther tidings must the ear
Of Isabel in secret hear.
These in her cloister walk, next morn,
Thus shared she with the Maid of Lorn:—

VI.

"My Edith, can I tell how dear
Our intercourse of hearts sincere
Hath been to Isabel?—
Judge then the sorrow of my heart,
When I must say the words, We part!
The cheerless convent-cell
Was not, sweet maiden, made for thee;
Go thou where thy vocation free
On happier fortunes fell.
Nor, Edith, judge thyself betray'd,
Though Robert knows that Lorn's high
And his poor silent page were one. [Maid
Versed in the fickle heart of man,

Earnest and anxious hath he look'd
How Ronald's heart the message brook'd
That gave him, with her last farewell,
The charge of Sister Isabel,
To think upon thy better right,
And keep the faith his promise plight.
Forgive him for thy sister's sake,
At first if vain repinings wake—
Long since that mood is gone:
Now dwells he on thy juster claims,
And oft his breach of faith he blames—
Forgive him for thine own!"

VII.

"No! never to Lord Ronald's bower
Will I again as paramour"——
"Nay, hush thee, too impatient maid,
Until my final tale be said!—
The good King Robert would engage
Edith once more his elfin page,
By her own heart, and her own eye,
Her lover's penitence to try—
Safe in his royal charge, and free,
Should such thy final purpose be,
Again unknown to seek the cell,
And live and die with Isabel."
Thus spoke the maid—King Robert's eye
Might have some glance of policy;
Dunstaffnage had the Monarch ta'en,
And Lorn had own'd King Robert's reign,
Her brother had to England fled,
And there in banishment was dead;
Ample, through exile, death, and flight,
O'er tower and land was Edith's right;
This ample right o'er tower and land
Were safe in Ronald's faithful hand.

VIII.

Embarrass'd eye and blushing cheek
Pleasure, and shame, and fear bespeak!
Yet much the reasoning Edith made:—
"Her sister's faith she must upbraid,
Who gave such secret, dark and dear,
In council to another's ear.
Why should she leave the peaceful cell?—
How should she part with Isabel?—
How wear that strange attire agen?—
How risk herself 'midst martial men?—
And how be guarded on the way?—
At least she might entreat delay."
Kind Isabel, with secret smile,
Saw and forgave the maiden's wile,
Reluctant to be thought to move
At the first call of truant love.

IX.

Oh, blame her not!—when zephyrs wake,
The aspen's trembling leaves must shake;
When beams the sun through April shower,
It needs must bloom, the violet flower;
And Love, howe'er the maiden strive,
Must with reviving hope revive!
A thousand soft excuses came,
To plead his cause 'gainst virgin shame.
Pledged by their sires in earliest youth,
He had her plighted faith and truth—
Then, 'twas her Liege's strict command,
And she, beneath his royal hand,
A ward in person and in land:—
And, last, she was resolved to stay
Only brief space—one little day—
Close hidden in her safe disguise
From all, but most from Ronald's eyes—
But once to see him more!—nor blame
Her wish—to hear him name her name!
Then, to bear back to solitude
The thought he had his falsehood rued!—
But Isabel, who long had seen
Her pallid cheek and pensive mien,
And well herself the cause might know,
Though innocent, of Edith's woe,
Joy'd, generous, that revolving time
Gave means to expiate the crime.
High glow'd her bosom as she said—
"Well shall her sufferings be repaid!"—
Now came the parting hour—a band
From Arran's mountains left the land;
Their chief, Fitz-Louis, had the care
The speechless Amadine to bear
To Bruce, with honour, as behoved
To page the Monarch dearly loved.

X.

The King had deem'd the maiden bright
Should reach him long before the fight,
But storms and fate her course delay.
It was on eve of battle-day,
When o'er the Gillie's-hill she rode.
The landscape like a furnace glow'd,
And far as e'er the eye was borne,
The lances waved like autumn corn.
In battles four, beneath their eye,
The forces of King Robert lie.
And one below the hill was laid,
Reserved for rescue and for aid;
And three, advanced, form'd vanward-line,
'Twixt Bannock's brook and Ninian's shrine.
Detach'd was each, yet each so nigh
As well might mutual aid supply.—
Beyond, the Southern host appears,
A boundless wilderness of spears,
Whose verge or rear the anxious eye
Strove far, but strove in vain, to spy.
Thick flashing in the evening beam,
Glaives, lances, bills, and banners gleam;
And where the heaven join'd with the hill,
Was distant armour flashing still,
So wide, so far, the boundless host
Seem'd in the blue horizon lost.

XI.

Down from the hill the maiden pass'd,
At the wild show of war aghast;

And traversed first the rearward host,
Reserved for aid where needed most.
The men of Carrick and of Ayr,
Lennox and Lanark, too, were there,
And all the western land;
With these the valiant of the Isles
Beneath their Chieftains rank'd their files,
In many a plaided band.
There, in the centre, proudly raised,
The Bruce's royal standard blaz'd,
And there Lord Ronald's banner bore
A galley driven by sail and oar.
A wild, yet pleasing contrast, made
Warriors in mail and plate array'd,
With the plumed bonnet and the plaid
By these Hebrideans worn;
But O! unseen for three long years,
Dear was the garb of mountaineers
To the fair Maid of Lorn!
For one she look'd—but he was far,
Busied amid the ranks of war—
Yet with affection's troubled eye
She mark'd his banner boldly fly,
Gave on the countless foe a glance,
And thought on battle's desperate chance.

XII.

To centre of the vanward-line
Fitz-Louis guided Amadine.
Arm'd all on foot, that host appears
A serried mass of glimmering spears.
There stood the Marchers' warlike band,
The warriors there of Lodon's land;
Ettrick and Liddell bent the yew,
A band of archers fierce, though few;
The men of Nith and Annan's vale,
And the bold spears of Teviotdale;—
The dauntless Douglas these obey,
And the young Stuart's gentle sway.
North-eastward by Saint Ninian's shrine,
Beneath fierce Randolph's charge, combine
The warriors whom the hardy North
From Tay to Sutherland sent forth.
The rest of Scotland's war-array
With Edward Bruce to westward lay,
Where Bannock, with his broken bank
And deep ravine, protects their flank.
Behind them, screen'd by sheltering wood,
The gallant Keith, Lord Marshal, stood:
His men-at-arms bare mace and lance,
And plumes that wave, and helms that
Thus fair divided by the King, [glance.
Centre, and right, and left-ward wing,
Composed his front; nor distant far
Was strong reserve to aid the war.
And 'twas to front of this array,
Her guide and Edith made their way.

XIII.

Here must they pause; for, in advance
As far as one might pitch a lance,
The Monarch rode along the van,*
The foe's approaching force to scan,
His line to marshal and to range,
And ranks to square, and fronts to change.
Alone he rode—from head to heel
Sheathed in his ready arms of steel;
Nor mounted yet on war-horse wight,
But, till more near the shock of fight,
Reining a palfrey low and light.
A diadem of gold was set
Above his bright steel basinet,
And clasp'd within its glittering twine
Was seen the glove of Argentine;
Truncheon or leading-staff he lacks,
Bearing, instead, a battle-axe.
He ranged his soldiers for the fight,
Accoutred thus, in open sight
Of either host.—Three bowshots far,
Paused the deep front of England's war,
And rested on their arms awhile,
To close and rank their warlike file,
And hold high council, if that night
Should view the strife, or dawning light.

XIV.

O gay, yet fearful to behold,
Flashing with steel, and rough with gold,
And bristled o'er with bills and spears,
With plumes and pennons waving fair,
Was that bright battle-front! for there
Rode England's King and Peers:
And who, that saw that Monarch ride,
His kingdom battled by his side,
Could then his direful doom foretell!—
Fair was his seat in knightly selle,
And in his sprightly eye was set
Some spark of the Plantagenet. [glance,
Though light and wandering was his
It flash'd at sight of shield and lance.
"Know'st thou," he said, "De Argentine,
Yon knight who marshals thus their
"The tokens on his helmet tell [line?"—
The Bruce, my Liege: I know him well."—
"And shall the audacious traitor brave
The presence where our banners wave?"—
"So please my Liege," said Argentine,
"Were he but horsed on steed like mine,
To give him fair and knightly chance,
I would adventure forth my lance."—
"In battle-day," the King replied,
"Nice tourney rules are set aside.
—Still must the rebel dare our wrath?
Set on him—Sweep him from our path!"—
And, at King Edward's signal, soon
Dash'd from the ranks Sir Henry Boune.

XV.

Of Hereford's high blood he came,
A race renown'd for knightly fame.
He burn'd before his Monarch's eye
To do some deed of chivalry.

He spurr'd his steed, he couch'd his lance,
And darted on the Bruce at once.
—As motionless as rocks, that bide
The wrath of the advancing tide, [high,
The Bruce stood fast.—Each breast beat
And dazzled was each gazing eye—
The heart had hardly time to think,
The eyelid scarce had time to wink,
While on the King, like flash of flame,
Spurr'd to full speed the war-horse came!
The partridge may the falcon mock,
If that slight palfrey stand the shock—
But, swerving from the Knight's career,
Just as they met, Bruce shunn'd the spear.
Onward the baffled warrior bore
His course—but soon his course was o'er!—
High in his stirrups stood the King,
And gave his battle-axe the swing.
Right on De Boune, the whiles he pass'd,
Fell that stern dint—the first—the last!—
Such strength upon the blow was put,
The helmet crash'd like hazel-nut;
The axe-shaft, with its brazen clasp,
Was shiver'd to the gauntlet grasp.
Springs from the blow the startled horse,
Drops to the plain the lifeless corse;
—First of that fatal field, how soon,
How sudden, fell the fierce De Boune!

XVI.

One pitying glance the Monarch sped,
Where on the field his foe lay dead;
Then gently turn'd his palfrey's head,
And, pacing back his sober way,
Slowly he gain'd his own array.
There round their King the leaders crowd,
And blame his recklessness aloud,
That risk'd 'gainst each adventurous spear,
A life so valued and so dear.—
His broken weapon's shaft survey'd
The King, and careless answer made,—
"My loss may pay my folly's tax;
I've broke my trusty battle-axe."
'Twas then Fitz-Louis, bending low,
Did Isabel's commission show;
Edith, disguised at distance stands,
And hides her blushes with her hands.
The Monarch's brow has changed its hue,
Away the gory axe he threw,
While to the seeming page he drew,
Clearing war's terrors from his eye.
Her hand with gentle ease he took,
With such a kind protecting look,
As to a weak and timid boy
Might speak, that elder brother's care
And elder brother's love was there.

XVII.

"Fear not," he said, "young Amadine!"
Then whisper'd—"Still that name be thine.
Fate plays her wonted fantasy,
Kind Amadine, with thee and me,
And sends thee here in doubtful hour.
But soon we are beyond her power;
For on this chosen battle-plain,
Victor or vanquish'd, I remain.
Do thou to yonder hill repair;
The followers of our host are there,
And all who may not weapons bear.—
Fitz-Louis, have him in thy care.—
Joyful we meet, if all go well;
If not, in Arran's holy cell
Thou must take part with Isabel;
For brave Lord Ronald, too, hath sworn,
Not to regain the Maid of Lorn
(The bliss on earth he covets most),
Would he forsake his battle-post,
Or shun the fortune that may fall
To Bruce, to Scotland, and to all.—
But, hark! some news these trumpets tell;
Forgive my haste—farewell!—farewell!"—
And in a lower voice he said, [maid!"
"Be of good cheer—farewell, sweet

XVIII.

"What train of dust, with trumpet-sound
And glimmering spears, is wheeling round
Our leftward flank?"—the Monarch cried,
To Moray's Earl, who rode beside.
"Lo! round thy station pass the foes!
Randolph, thy wreath hath lost a rose."
The Earl his visor closed, and said—
"My wreath shall bloom, or life shall fade.—
Follow, my household!"—And they go
Like lightning on the advancing foe.
"My Liege," said noble Douglas then,
"Earl Randolph has but one to ten:
Let me go forth his band to aid!"—
—"Stir not. The error he hath made,
Let him amend it as he may;
I will not weaken mine array."
Then loudly rose the conflict-cry,
And Douglas's brave heart swell'd high,—
"My Liege," he said, "with patient ear
I must not Moray's death-knell hear!"—
"Then go—but speed thee back again."—
Forth sprung the Douglas with his train:
But, when they won a rising hill,
He bade his followers hold them still.—
"See, see! the routed Southern fly!
The Earl hath won the victory.
Lo! where yon steeds run masterless,
His banner towers above the press.
Rein up; our presence would impair
The fame we come too late to share."
Back to the host the Douglas rode,
And soon glad tidings are abroad,
That, Dayncourt by stout Randolph slain,
His followers fled with loosen'd rein.—
That skirmish closed the busy day,
And, couch'd in battle's prompt array,
Each army on their weapons lay.

XIX.

It was a night of lovely June,
High rode in cloudless blue the moon,
Demayet smiled beneath her ray;
Old Stirling's towers arose in light,
And, twined in links of silver bright,
Her winding river lay.
Ah, gentle planet! other sight
Shall greet thee next returning night,
Of broken arms and banners tore,
And marshes dark with human gore,
And piles of slaughter'd men and horse,
And Forth that floats the frequent corse,
And many a wounded wretch to plain
Beneath thy silver light in vain!
But now, from England's host, the cry
Thou hear'st of wassail revelry,
While from the Scottish legions pass
The murmur'd prayer, the early mass!—
Here, numbers had presumption given;
There, bands o'er-match'd sought aid from Heaven.

XX.

On Gillie's-hill, whose height commands
The battle-field, fair Edith stands,
With serf and page unfit for war,
To eye the conflict from afar.
O! with what doubtful agony
She sees the dawning tint the sky!—
Now on the Ochils gleams the sun,
And glistens now Demayet dun;
Is it the lark that carols shrill?
Is it the bittern's early hum?
No!—distant, but increasing still,
The trumpet's sound swells up the hill,
With the deep murmur of the drum.
Responsive from the Scottish host,
Pipe-clang and bugle-sound were toss'd,*
His breast and brow each soldier cross'd,
And started from the ground;
Arm'd and array'd for instant fight,
Rose archer, spearman, squire, and knight,
And in the pomp of battle bright
The dread battalia frown'd.

XXI.

Now onward, and in open view,
The countless ranks of England drew,
Dark rolling like the ocean-tide,
When the rough west hath chafed his pride,
And his deep roar sends challenge wide
To all that bars his way!
In front the gallant archers trode,
The men-at-arms behind them rode,
And midmost of the phalanx broad
The Monarch held his sway.
Beside him many a war-horse fumes,
Around him waves a sea of plumes,
Where many a knight in battle known,
And some who spurs had first braced on,
And deem'd that fight should see them won,
King Edward's hests obey.
De Argentine attends his side, [pride,
With stout De Valence, Pembroke's
Selected champions from the train,
To wait upon his bridle-rein.
Upon the Scottish foe he gazed—
—At once, before his sight amazed,
Sunk banner, spear, and shield;
Each weapon-point is downward sent,
Each warrior to the ground is bent.
"The rebels, Argentine, repent!
For pardon they have kneel'd."—
"Ay!—but they bend to other powers,
And other pardon sue than ours!
See where yon bare-foot Abbot stands,
And blesses them with lifted hands!*
Upon the spot where they have kneel'd,
These men will die or win the field."—
—"Then prove we if they die or win!
Bid Gloster's Earl the fight begin."

XXII.

Earl Gilbert waved his truncheon high,
Just as the Northern ranks arose,
Signal for England's archery
To halt and bend their bows.
Then stepp'd each yeoman forth a pace,
Glanced at the intervening space,
And raised his left hand high;
To the right ear the cords they bring—
—At once ten thousand bow-strings ring,
Ten thousand arrows fly!
Nor paused on the devoted Scot
The ceaseless fury of their shot;
As fiercely and as fast,
Forth whistling came the grey-goose wing
As the wild hailstones pelt and ring
Adown December's blast.
Nor mountain targe of tough bull-hide,
Nor lowland mail, that storm may bide;
Woe, woe to Scotland's banner'd pride,
If the fell shower may last!
Upon the right, behind the wood,
Each by his steed dismounted, stood
The Scottish chivalry;—
With foot in stirrup, hand on mane,
Fierce Edward Bruce can scarce restrain
His own keen heart, his eager train,
Until the archers gain'd the plain;
Then, "Mount, ye gallants free!"
He cried; and, vaulting from the ground,
His saddle every horseman found.
On high their glittering crests they toss,
As springs the wild-fire from the moss;
The shield hangs down on every breast,
Each ready lance is in the rest,
And loud shouts Edward Bruce—
"Forth, Marshal! on the peasant foe!
We'll tame the terrors of their bow,
And cut the bow-string loose!"*

XXIII.

Then spurs were dashed in chargers' flanks,
They rush'd among the archer ranks,
No spears were there the shock to let,
No stakes to turn the charge were set,
And how shall yeoman's armour slight,
Stand the long lance and mace of might?
Or what may their short swords avail,
Gainst barbèd horse and shirt of mail?
Amid their ranks the chargers sprung,
High o'er their heads the weapons swung,
And shriek and groan and vengeful shout
Give note of triumph and of rout!
Awhile, with stubborn hardihood,
Their English hearts the strife made good.
Borne down at length on every side,
Compell'd to flight, they scatter wide.—
Let stags of Sherwood leap for glee,
And bound the deer of Dallom-Lee!
The broken bows of Bannock's shore
Shall in the greenwood ring no more!
Round Wakefield's merry May-pole now,
The maids may twine the summer bough,
May northward look with longing glance,
For those that wont to lead the dance,
For the blithe archers look in vain!
Broken, dispersed, in flight o'erta'en,
Pierced through, trode down, by thousands slain,
They cumber Bannock's bloody plain.

XXIV.

The King with scorn beheld their flight.
"Are these," he said, "our yeomen wight?
Each braggart churl could boast before,
Twelve Scottish lives his baldric bore!*
Fitter to plunder chase or park,
Than make a manly foe their mark.—
Forward, each gentleman and knight!
Let gentle blood show generous might,
And chivalry redeem the fight!"
To rightward of the wild affray,
The field show'd fair and level way;
But, in mid-space, the Bruce's care
Had bored the ground with many a pit,
With turf and brushwood hidden yet,
That form'd a ghastly snare.
Rushing, ten thousand horsemen came,
With spears in rest, and hearts on flame,
That panted for the shock!
With blazing crests and banners spread,
And trumpet-clang and clamour dread,
The wide plain thunder'd to their tread,
As far as Stirling rock.
Down! down! in headlong overthrow,
Horsemen and horse, the foremost go,*
Wild floundering on the field!
The first are in destruction's gorge,
Their followers wildly o'er them urge;—
The knightly helm and shield,
The mail, the acton, and the spear,
Strong hand, high heart, are useless here!
Loud from the mass confused the cry
Of dying warriors swells on high,
And steeds that shriek in agony!*
They came like mountain-torrent red,
That thunders o'er its rocky bed;
They broke like that same torrent's wave
When swallow'd by a darksome cave.
Billows on billows burst and boil,
Maintaining still the stern turmoil,
And to their wild and tortured groan
Each adds new terrors of his own!

XXV.

Too strong in courage and in might
Was England yet, to yield the fight.
Her noblest all are here;
Names that to fear were never known,
Bold Norfolk's Earl de Brotherton,
And Oxford's famed De Vere.
There Gloster plied the bloody sword,
And Berkley, Grey, and Hereford,
Bottetourt and Sanzavere,
Ross, Montague, and Mauley, came,
And Courtenay's pride, and Percy's fame—
Names known too well in Scotland's war,
At Falkirk, Methven, and Dunbar,
Blazed broader yet in after years,
At Cressy red and fell Poitiers.
Pembroke with these, and Argentine,
Brought up the rearward battle-line.
With caution o'er the ground they tread,
Slippery with blood and piled with dead,
Till hand to hand in battle set,
The bills with spears and axes met,
And, closing dark on every side,
Raged the full contest far and wide.
Then was the strength of Douglas tried,
Then proved was Randolph's generous pride,
And well did Stewart's actions grace
The sire of Scotland's royal race!
Firmly they kept their ground;
As firmly England onward press'd,
And down went many a noble crest,
And rent was many a valiant breast,
And Slaughter revell'd round.

XXVI.

Unflinching foot 'gainst foot was set,
Unceasing blow by blow was met;
The groans of those who fell
Were drown'd amid the shriller clang
That from the blades and harness rang,
And in the battle-yell.
Yet fast they fell, unheard, forgot,
Both Southern fierce and hardy Scot;
And O! amid that waste of life,
What various motives fired the strife!
The aspiring Noble bled for fame,
The Patriot for his country's claim;

This Knight his youthful strength to prove,
And that to win his lady's love;
Some fought from ruffian thirst of blood,
From habit some, or hardihood.
But ruffian stern, and soldier good,
The noble and the slave,
From various cause the same wild road,
On the same bloody morning, trode,
To that dark inn, the grave!

XXVII.

The tug of strife to flag begins,
Though neither loses yet, nor wins.
High rides the sun, thick rolls the dust,
And feebler speeds the blow and thrust.
Douglas leans on his war-sword now,
And Randolph wipes his bloody brow;
Nor less had toil'd each Southern knight,
From morn till mid-day in the fight.
Strong Egremont for air must gasp,
Beauchamp undoes his visor-clasp,
And Montague must quit his spear,
And sinks thy falchion, bold De Vere!
The blows of Berkley fall less fast,
And gallant Pembroke's bugle-blast
Hath lost its lively tone;
Sinks, Argentine, thy battle-word,
And Percy's shout was fainter heard,
"My merry-men, fight on!"

XXVIII.

Bruce, with the pilot's wary eye,
The slackening of the storm could spy.
"One effort more, and Scotland's free!
Lord of the Isles, my trust in thee
Is firm as Ailsa Rock;* [targe,
Rush on with Highland sword and
I with my Carrick spearmen charge;
Now, forward to the shock!"
At once the spears were forward thrown,
Against the sun the broadswords shone;
The pibroch lent its maddening tone,
And loud King Robert's voice was known—
"Carrick, press on—they fail, they fail!
Press on, brave sons of Innisgail,
The foe is fainting fast!
Each strike for parent, child, and wife,
For Scotland, liberty, and life,—
The battle cannot last!"

XXIX.

The fresh and desperate onset bore
The foes three furlongs back and more,
Leaving their noblest in their gore.
Alone, De Argentine
Yet bears on high his red-cross shield,
Gathers the relics of the field,
Renews the ranks where they have reel'd,
And still makes good the line.
Brief strife, but fierce,—his efforts raise
A bright but momentary blaze.

Fair Edith heard the Southern shout,
Beheld them turning from the rout,
Heard the wild call their trumpets sent,
In notes 'twixt triumph and lament.
That rallying force, combined anew,
Appear'd in her distracted view
To hem the Islesmen round:
"O God! the combat they renew,
And is no rescue found!
And ye that look thus tamely on,
And see your native land o'erthrown,
O! are your hearts of flesh or stone?"

XXX.

The multitude that watch'd afar,
Rejected from the ranks of war,
Had not unmoved beheld the fight, [right;
When strove the Bruce for Scotland's
Each heart had caught the patriot spark,
Old man and stripling, priest and clerk,
Bondsman and serf; even female hand
Stretch'd to the hatchet or the brand;
But, when mute Amadine they heard
Give to their zeal his signal-word,
A frenzy fired the throng;—
"Portents and miracles impeach
Our sloth—the dumb our duties teach—
And he that gives the mute his speech,
Can bid the weak be strong.
To us, as to our lords, are given
A native earth, a promised heaven;
To us, as to our lords, belongs
The vengeance for our nation's wrongs;
The choice, 'twixt death or freedom, warms
Our breasts as theirs—To arms! to arms!"
To arms they flew,—axe, club, or spear,—
And mimic ensigns high they rear,*
And, like a banner'd host afar,
Bear down on England's wearied war.

XXXI.

Already scatter'd o'er the plain,
Reproof, command, and counsel vain,
The rearward squadrons fled amain,
Or made but doubtful stay;—
But when they mark'd the seeming show
Of fresh and fierce and marshall'd foe,
The boldest broke array.—
O give their hapless prince his due!
In vain the royal Edward threw
His person 'mid the spears,
Cried, "Fight!" to terror and despair,
Menaced, and wept, and tore his hair,
And cursed their caitiff fears;
Till Pembroke turn'd his bridle rein,
And forced him from the fatal plain.
With them rode Argentine, until
They gain'd the summit of the hill,
But quitted there the train:—
"In yonder field a gage I left,—
I must not live of fame bereft;
I needs must turn again.

Speed hence, my Liege, for on your trace
The fiery Douglas takes the chase,
I know his banner well.
God send my Sovereign joy and bliss,
And many a happier field than this!—
Once more, my Liege, farewell!"

XXXII.

Again he faced the battle-field,—
Wildly they fly, are slain, or yield. [spear,
"Now then," he said, and couch'd his
"My course is run, the goal is near;
One effort more, one brave career,
Must close this race of mine."
Then in his stirrups rising high,
He shouted loud his battle-cry—
"Saint James for Argentine!"
And, of the bold pursuers, four
The gallant knight from saddle bore;
But not unharm'd—a lance's point
Has found his breastplate's loosen'd joint,
An axe has razed his crest;
Yet still on Colonsay's fierce lord,
Who press'd the chase with gory sword,
He rode with spear in rest,
And through his bloody tartans bored,
And through his gallant breast.
Nail'd to the earth, the mountaineer
Yet writhed him up against the spear,
And swung his broadsword round!
—Stirrup, steel-boot, and cuish gave way,
Beneath that blow's tremendous sway,
The blood gush'd from the wound;
And the grim Lord of Colonsay
Hath turn'd him on the ground,
And laugh'd in death-pang, that his blade
The mortal thrust so well repaid.

XXXIII.

Now toil'd the Bruce, the battle done,
To use his conquest boldly won;
And gave command for horse and spear
To press the Southron's scatter'd rear,
Nor let his broken force combine,
—When the war-cry of Argentine
Fell faintly on his ear;—
"Save, save his life," he cried, "O save
The kind, the noble, and the brave!"
The squadrons round free passage gave—
The wounded knight drew near;
He raised his red-cross shield no more,
Helm, cuish, and breastplate stream'd with gore,
Yet, as he saw the King advance,
He strove even then to couch his lance—
The effort was in vain!
The spur-stroke fail'd to rouse the horse;
Wounded and weary, in mid course
He stumbled on the plain.
Then foremost was the generous Bruce
To raise his head, his helm to loose;—
"Lord Earl, the day is thine!
My Sovereign's charge, and adverse fate,
Have made our meeting all too late:
Yet this may Argentine,
As boon from ancient comrade, crave—
A Christian's mass, a soldier's grave."

XXXIV.

Bruce press'd his dying hand—its grasp
Kindly replied; but, in his clasp,
It stiffen'd and grew cold—
"And, O farewell!" the victor cried,
"Of chivalry the flower and pride,
The arm in battle bold,
The courteous mien, the noble race,
The stainless faith, the manly face!—
Bid Ninian's convent light their shrine,
For late-wake of De Argentine.
O'er better knight on death-bier laid,
Torch never gleam'd, nor mass was said!"

XXXV.

Not for De Argentine alone, [shone,
Through Ninian's church these torches
And rose the death-prayer's awful tone.
That yellow lustre glimmer'd pale,
On broken plate and bloodied mail,
Rent crest and shatter'd coronet,
Of Baron, Earl, and Banneret;
And the best names that England knew,
Claim'd in the death-prayer dismal due.
Yet mourn not, Land of Fame!
Though ne'er the Leopards on thy shield
Retreated from so sad a field,
Since Norman William came.
Oft may thine annals justly boast
Of battles stern by Scotland lost;
Grudge not her victory,
When for her freeborn rights she strove—
Rights dear to all who freedom love,
To none so dear as thee!

XXXVI.

Turn we to Bruce, whose curious ear
Must from Fitz-Louis tidings hear;
With him, a hundred voices tell
Of prodigy and miracle,
"For the mute page had spoke."—
"Page!" said Fitz-Louis,—"rather say,
An angel sent from realms of day,
To burst the English yoke.
I saw his plume and bonnet drop,
When hurrying from the mountain-top;
A lovely brow, dark locks that wave,
To his bright eyes new lustre gave;
A step as light upon the green,
As if his pinions waved unseen!"—
"Spoke he with none?"—"With none—one word
Burst when he saw the Island Lord,
Returning from the battle-field."—
"What answer made the Chief?"—"He kneel'd,

Durst not look up, but mutter'd low,
Some mingled sounds that none might know,
And greeted him 'twixt joy and fear,
As being of superior sphere."

XXXVII.

Even upon Bannock's bloody plain,
Heap'd then with thousands of the slain,
Mid victor monarch's musings high,
Mirth laugh'd in good King Robert's eye:—
"And bore he such angelic air,
Such noble front, such waving hair?
Hath Ronald kneel'd to him?" he said;
"Then must we call the church to aid—
Our will be to the Abbot known,
Ere these strange news are wider blown,
To Cambuskenneth straight ye pass,
And deck the church for solemn mass,
To pay for high deliverance given,
A nation's thanks to gracious Heaven.
Let him array, besides, such state,
As should on princes' nuptials wait.
Ourself the cause, through fortune's spite,
That once broke short that spousal rite,
Ourself will grace, with early morn,
The Bridal of the Maid of Lorn."

CONCLUSION.

Go forth, my Song, upon thy venturous way;
Go boldly forth; nor yet thy master blame,
Who chose no patron for his humble lay,
And graced thy numbers with no friendly name,
Whose partial zeal might smooth thy path to fame.
There was—and O! how many sorrows claim
Into these two brief words!—*there was* a crowd
By generous friendship given—had fate allow'd,
It well had bid thee rank the proudest of the proud!

All angel now—yet little less than all,
While still a pilgrim in our world below!
What 'vails it us that patience to recall,
Which hid its own to soothe all other woe;
What 'vails to tell, how Virtue's purest glow
Shone yet more lovely in a form so fair;
And, least of all, what 'vails the world should know,
That one poor garland, twined to deck thy hair,
Is hung upon thy hearse, to droop and wither there!

THE BRIDAL OF TRIERMAIN:

OR,

THE VALE OF ST. JOHN.

A LOVER'S TALE.

PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION.

In the Edinburgh Annual Register for the year 1809, Three Fragments were inserted, written in imitation of Living Poets. It must have been apparent that, by these profusions, nothing burlesque or disrespectful to the authors was intended, but that they were offered to the public as serious, though certainly very imperfect, imitations of that style of composition by which each of the writers is supposed to be distinguished. As these exercises attracted a greater degree of attention than the author anticipated, he has been induced to complete one of them, and present it as a separate publication.

It is not in this place that an examination of the works of the master whom he has here adopted as his model can, with propriety, be introduced; since his general acquiescence in the favourable suffrage of the public must necessarily be interred from the attempt he has now made. He is induced, by the nature of his subject, to offer a few remarks on what has been called romantic poetry; the popularity of which has been revived in the present day, under the auspices, and by the unparallelled success, of one individual.

The original purpose of poetry is either religious or historical, or, as must frequently happen, a mixture of both. To modern readers, the poems of Homer have many of the features of pure romance; but in the estimation of his contemporaries, they probably derived their chief value from their supposed historical authenticity. The same may be generally said of the poetry of all early ages. The marvels and miracles which the poet blends with his song, do not exceed in number or extravagance the figments of the historians of the same period of society: and, indeed, the difference between poetry and prose, as the vehicles of historical truth, is always of late introduction. Poets, under various denominations of Bards, Scalds, Chroniclers, and so forth, are the first historians of all nations. Their intention is to relate the events they have witnessed, or the traditions that have reached them; and they clothe the relation in rhyme, merely as the means of rendering it more solemn in the narrative or more easily committed to memory. But as the poetical historian improves in the art of conveying information, the authenticity of his narrative unavoidably declines. He is tempted to dilate and dwell upon the events that are interesting to his imagination, and, conscious how indifferent his audience is to the naked truth of his poem, his history gradually becomes a romance.

It is in this situation that those epics are found which have been generally regarded the standards of poetry; and it has happened, somewhat strangely, that the moderns have pointed out, as the characteristics and peculiar excellences of narrative poetry, the very circumstances which the authors themselves adopted, only because their art involved the duties of the historian as well as the poet. It cannot be believed, for example, that Homer selected the siege of Troy as the most appropriate subject for poetry; his purpose was to write the early history of his country: the event he has chosen, though not very fruitful in varied incident, nor perfectly well adapted for poetry, was, nevertheless, combined with traditionary and genealogical anecdotes extremely interesting to those who were to listen to him; and this he has adorned by the exertions of a genius which, if it has been equalled, has certainly never been surpassed. It was not till comparatively a late period that the general accuracy of his narrative, or his purpose in composing it, was brought into question. Δοκεῖ πρῶτος [ὁ Αναξαγόρας] (καθά φησι Φαβορῖνος εν παντοδαπῇ 'Ιστορία) τὴν 'Ομήρου ποίησιν ἀποφήνασθαι εἶναι περὶ ἀρετῆς καὶ δικαιοσύνης. But whatever theories might be framed by speculative men, his work was of an historical, not of an allegorical nature. Εναντίλλετο μετὰ τοῦ Μέντεω καὶ ὅπον ἑκάστοτε αφικοιτο, πάντα τὰ επιχώρια διερωτᾶτο, καὶ ἱστορέων επυνθάνετο· εἰκὸς δέ μιν ην καὶ μνημοσυνα πάντων γράφεσθαι.

Instead of recommending the choice of a subject similar to that of Homer, it was to be expected that critics should have exhorted the poets of these latter days to adopt or invent a narrative in itself more susceptible of poetical ornament, and to avail themselves of that advantage in order to compensate, in some degree, the inferiority of genius. The contrary course has been inculcated by almost all the writers upon the *Epopœia;* with what success the fate of Homer's numerous imitators may best show. The *ultimum supplicium* of criticism was inflicted on the author if he did not choose a subject which at once deprived him of all claim to originality, and placed him, if not in actual contest, at least in fatal comparison, with those giants in the land whom it was most his interest to avoid. The celebrated receipt for writing an epic poem, which appeared in *The Guardian*, was the first instance in which common sense was applied to this department of poetry; and, indeed, if the question be considered on its own merits, we must be satisfied that narrative poetry, if strictly confined to the great occurrences of history, would be deprived of the individual interest which it is so well calculated to excite.

Modern poets may therefore be pardoned in seeking simpler subjects of verse, more interesting in proportion to their simplicity. Two or three figures, well grouped, suit the artist better than a crowd, for whatever purpose assembled. For the same reason, a scene immediately presented to the imagination, and directly brought home to the feelings, though involving the fate of but one or two persons, is more favourable for poetry than the political struggles and convulsions which influence the fate of kingdoms. The former are within the reach and comprehension of all, and, if depicted with vigour, seldom fail to fix attention: the other, if more sublime, are more vague and distant, less capable of being distinctly understood, and infinitely less capable of exciting those sentiments which it is the very purpose of poetry to inspire. To generalise is always to destroy effect. We would, for example, be more interested in the fate of an individual soldier in combat, than in the grand event of a general action: with the happiness of two lovers raised from misery and anxiety to peace and union, than with the successful exertions of a whole nation. From what causes this may originate, is a separate and obviously an immaterial consideration. Before ascribing this peculiarity to causes decidedly and odiously selfish, it is proper to recollect that, while men see only a limited space, and while their affections and conduct are regulated, not by aspiring to an universal good, but by exerting their power of making themselves and others happy within the limited scale allotted to each individual, so long will individual history and individual virtue be the readier and more accessible road to general interest and attention: and, perhaps, we may add that it is the more useful as well as the more accessible, inasmuch as it affords an example capable of being easily imitated.

According to the author's idea of Romantic Poetry, as distinguished from Epic, the former comprehends a fictitious narrative, framed and combined at the pleasure of the writer; beginning and ending as he may judge best: which neither exacts nor refuses the use of supernatural machinery; which is free from the technical rules of the *Epée;* and is subject only to those which good sense, good taste, and good morals apply to every species of poetry without exception. The date may be in a remote age, or in the present: the story may detail the adventures of a prince or of a peasant. In a word, the author is absolute master of his country and its inhabitants, and everything is permitted to him, excepting to be heavy or prosaic, for which, free and unembarrassed as he is, he has no manner of apology. Those, it is probable, will be found the peculiarities of this species of composition; and before joining the outcry against the vitiated taste that fosters and encourages it, the justice and grounds of it ought to be made perfectly apparent. If the want of sieges, and battles, and great military evolutions, in our poetry, is complained of, let us reflect that the campaigns and heroes of our days are perpetuated in a record that neither requires nor admits of the aid of fiction; and if the complaint refers to the inferiority of our bards, let us pay a just tribute to their modesty, limiting them, as it does, to subjects which, however indifferently treated, have still the interest and charm of novelty, and which thus prevents them from adding insipidity to their other more insuperable defects.

THE BRIDAL OF TRIERMAIN.

INTRODUCTION.

I.

COME, LUCY! while 'tis morning hour,
The woodland brook we needs must pass;
So, ere the sun assume his power,
We shelter in our poplar bower,
Where dew lies long upon the flower,
Though vanish'd from the velvet grass.
Curbing the stream, this stony ridge
May serve us for a sylvan bridge;
For here compell'd to disunite,
Round petty isles the runnels glide,
And chafing off their puny spite,
The shallow murmurers waste their might,
Yielding to footstep free and light
A dry-shod pass from side to side.

II.

Nay, why this hesitating pause?
And, Lucy, as thy step withdraws,
Why sidelong eye the streamlet's brim?
Titania's foot without a slip,
Like thine, though timid, light, and slim,
From stone to stone might safely trip,
Nor risk the glow-worm clasp to dip
That binds her slipper's silken rim.
Or trust thy lover's strength: nor fear
That this same stalwart arm of mine,
Which could yon oak's prone trunk uprear,
Shall shrink beneath the burden dear
Of form so slender, light, and fine—
So,—now, the danger dared at last,
Look back, and smile at perils past!

III.

And now we reach the favourite glade,
Paled in by copsewood, cliff, and stone,
Where never harsher sounds invade,
To break affection's whispering tone,
Than the deep breeze that waves the shade,
Than the small brooklet's feeble moan.
Come! rest thee on thy wonted seat,
Moss'd is the stone, the turf is green,
A place where lovers best may meet,
Who would that not their love be seen.
The boughs, that dim the summer sky,
Shall hide us from each lurking spy,
That fain would spread the invidious tale,
How Lucy of the lofty eye,
Noble in birth, in fortunes high,
She for whom lords and barons sigh,
Meets her poor Arthur in the dale.

IV.

How deep that blush!—how deep that sigh!
And why does Lucy shun mine eye?
Is it because that crimson draws
Its colour from some secret cause,
Some hidden movement of the breast,
She would not that her Arthur guess'd?
O! quicker far is lover's ken
Than the dull glance of common men,
And, by strange sympathy, can spell
The thoughts the loved one will not tell!
And mine, in Lucy's blush, saw met
The hues of pleasure and regret;
Pride mingled in the sigh her voice,
And shared with Love the crimson glow;
Well pleased that thou art Arthur's choice,
Yet shamed thine own is placed so low:
Thou turn'st thy self-confessing cheek,
As if to meet the breeze's cooling;
Then, Lucy, hear thy tutor speak,
For Love, too, has his hours of schooling.

V.

Too oft my anxious eye has spied
That secret grief thou fain wouldst hide,
The passing pang of humbled pride;
Too oft, when through the splendid hall,
The load-star of each heart and eye,
My fair one leads the glittering ball,
Will her stol'n glance on Arthur fall,
With such a blush and such a sigh!
Thou would'st not yield, for wealth or rank,
The heart thy worth and beauty won,
Nor leave me on this mossy bank,
To meet a rival on a throne:
Why, then, should vain repining rise,
That to thy lover fate denies

A nobler name, a wide domain,
A Baron's birth, a menial train,
Since Heaven assign'd him, for his part,
A lyre, a falchion, and a heart?

VI.

My sword—its master must be dumb;
But, when a soldier names my name,
Approach, my Lucy! fearless come,
Nor dread to hear of Arthur's shame.
My heart—'mid all yon courtly crew,
Of lordly rank and lofty line,
Is there to love and honour true,
That boasts a pulse so warm as mine?
They praised thy diamonds' lustre rare—
Match'd with thine eyes, I thought it faded; [hair—
They praised the pearls that bound thy
I only saw the locks they braided;
They talk'd of wealthy dower and land,
And titles of high birth the token—
I thought of Lucy's heart and hand,
Nor knew the sense of what was spoken.
And yet, if rank'd in Fortune's roll,
I might have learn'd their choice unwise,
Who rate the dower above the soul,
And Lucy's diamonds o'er her eyes.

VII.

My lyre—it is an idle toy,
That borrows accents not its own,
Like warbler of Colombian sky,
That sings but in a mimic tone.
Ne'er did it sound o'er sainted well,
Nor boasts it aught of Border spell;
Its strings no feudal slogan pour,
Its heroes draw no broad claymore;
No shouting clans applauses raise,
Because it sung their father's praise;
On Scottish moor, or English down,
It ne'er was graced by fair renown;
Nor won,—best meed to minstrel true,—
One favouring smile from fair BUCCLEUCH!
By one poor streamlet sounds its tone,
And heard by one dear maid alone.

VIII.

But, if thou bid'st, these tones shall tell
Of errant knight, and damozelle;
Of the dread knot a Wizard tied,
In punishment of maiden's pride,
In notes of marvel and of fear,
That best may charm romantic ear.
For Lucy loves,—like COLLINS, ill-starr'd name!
Whose lay's requital was that tardy fame,
Who bound no laurel round his living head, [dead,—
Should hang it o'er his monument when
For Lucy loves to tread enchanted strand,
And thread, like him, the maze of fairy land;
Of golden battlements to view the gleam,
And slumber soft by some Elysian stream;
Such lays she loves,—and, such my Lucy's choice, [voice?
What other song can claim her Poet's

CANTO FIRST.

I.

WHERE is the Maiden of mortal strain,
That may match with the Baron of Triermain?
She must be lovely, and constant, and kind,
Holy and pure, and humble of mind,
Blithe of cheer, and gentle of mood,
Courteous, and generous, and noble of blood—
Lovely as the sun's first ray,
When it breaks the clouds of an April day;
Constant and true as the widow'd dove,
Kind as a minstrel that sings of love;
Pure as the fountain in rocky cave,
Where never sunbeam kiss'd the wave;
Humble as maiden that loves in vain,
Holy as hermit's vesper strain;
Gentle as breeze that but whispers and dies, [its sighs;
Yet blithe as the light leaves that dance in
Courteous as monarch the morn he is crown'd, [glad ground;
Generous as spring-dews that bless the
Noble her blood as the currents that met
In the veins of the noblest Plantagenet—
Such must her form be, her mood, and her strain, [Triermain.
That shall match with Sir Roland of

II.

Sir Roland de Vaux he hath laid him to sleep, [was deep.
His blood it was fever'd, his breathing
He had been pricking against the Scot,
The foray was long, and the skirmish hot;
His dinted helm and his buckler's plight
Bore token of a stubborn fight.
All in the castle must hold them still,
Harpers must lull him to his rest,
With the slow soft tunes he loves the best,
Till sleep sink down upon his breast,
Like the dew on a summer hill.

III.

It was the dawn of an autumn day;
The sun was struggling with frost-fog grey
That like a silvery crape was spread
Round Skiddaw's dim and distant head,
And faintly gleam'd each painted pane
Of the lordly halls of Triermain,
When that Baron bold awoke.
Starting he woke, and loudly did call,
Rousing his menials in bower and hall,
While hastily he spoke.

IV.

"Hearken, my minstrels! Which of ye all
Touch'd his harp with that dying fall,
So sweet, so soft, so faint,
It seem'd an angel's whisper'd call
To an expiring saint?
And hearken, my merry-men! What time or where
Did she pass, that maid with her heavenly brow,
With her look so sweet and her eyes so fair,
And her graceful step and her angel air,
And the eagle plume in her dark-brown hair, [now?"
That pass'd from my bower e'en

V.

Answer'd him Richard de Bretville; he
Was chief of the Baron's minstrelsy,—
"Silent, noble chieftain, we
Have sat since midnight close, [sings,
When such lulling sounds as the brooklet
Murmur'd from our melting strings,
And hush'd you to repose.
Had a harp-note sounded here,
It had caught my watchful ear,
Although it fell as faint and shy
As bashful maiden's half-formed sigh,
When she thinks her lover near."—
Answer'd Philip of Fasthwaite tall,
He kept guard in the outer hall,—
"Since at eve our watch took post,
Not a foot has thy portal cross'd;
Else had I heard the steps, though low
And light they fell, as when earth receives,
In morn of frost, the wither'd leaves,
That drop when no winds blow."—

VI.

"Then come thou hither, Henry, my page,
Whom I saved from the sack of Hermitage,
When that dark castle, tower, and spire,
Rose to the skies a pile of fire,
And redden'd all the Nine-stane Hill,
And the shrieks of death, that wildly broke
Through devouring flame and smothering smoke,
Made the warrior's heart-blood chill.
The trustiest thou of all my train,
My fleetest courser thou must rein,
And ride to Lyulph's tower,
And from the Baron of Triermain
Greet well that sage of power.
He is sprung from Druid sires,
And British bards that tuned their lyres
To Arthur's and Pendragon's praise,
And his who sleeps at Dunmailraise.
Gifted like his gifted race,
He the characters can trace,
Graven deep in elder time
Upon Helvellyn's cliffs sublime;
Sign and sigil well doth he know,
And can bode of weal and woe,
Of kingdoms' fall and fate of wars,
From mystic dreams and course of stars.
He shall tell if middle earth
To that enchanting shape gave birth,
Or if 'twas but an airy thing,
Such as fantastic slumbers bring,
Framed from the rainbow's varying dyes,
Or fading tints of western skies.
For, by the Blessed Rood I swear,
If that fair form breathe vital air,
No other maiden by my side
Shall ever rest De Vaux's bride!"

VII.

The faithful Page he mounts his steed,
And soon he cross'd green Irthing's mead,
Dash'd o'er Kirkoswald's verdant plain,
And Eden barr'd his course in vain.
He pass'd red Penrith's Table Round,*
For feats of chivalry renown'd,
Left Mayburgh's mound and stones of power,*
By Druids raised in magic hour,
And traced the Eamont's winding way,
Till Ulfo's lake beneath him lay.

VIII.

Onward he rode, the pathway still
Winding betwixt the lake and hill;
Till, on the fragment of a rock,
Struck from its base by lightning shock,
He saw the hoary Sage:
The silver moss and lichen twined,
With fern and deer-hair check'd and lined,
A cushion fit for age;
And o'er him shook the aspen-tree,
A restless rustling canopy.
Then sprung young Henry from his selle,
And greeted Lyulph grave,
And then his master's tale did tell,
And then for counsel crave.
The Man of Years mused long and deep,
Of time's lost treasures taking keep,
And then, as rousing from a sleep,
His solemn answer gave.

IX.

"That maid is born of middle earth,
And may of man be won,
Though there have glided since her birth
Five hundred years and one.
But where's the Knight in all the north,
That dare the adventure follow forth,
So perilous to knightly worth,
In the valley of Saint John?
Listen, youth, to what I tell,
And bind it on thy memory well;
Nor muse that I commence the rhyme
Far distant 'mid the wrecks of time.

* An asterisk in these pages signifies that a note upon the passage is to be found at the end of the volume.

The mystic tale, by bard and sage,
Is handed down from Merlin's age.

X.

LYULPH'S TALE.

"KING ARTHUR has ridden from merry Carlisle
When Pentecost was o'er:
He journey'd like errant-knight the while,
And sweetly the summer sun did smile
On mountain, moss, and moor.
Above his solitary track
Rose Glaramara's ridgy back,
Amid whose yawning gulfs the sun
Cast umber'd radiance red and dun,
Though never sunbeam could discern
The surface of that sable tarn,
In whose black mirror you may spy
The stars, while noontide lights the sky.
The gallant King he skirted still
The margin of that mighty hill;
Rock upon rocks incumbent hung,
And torrents, down the gullies flung,
Join'd the rude river that brawl'd on,
Recoiling now from crag and stone,
Now diving deep from human ken,
And raving down its darksome glen.
The Monarch judged this desert wild,
With such romantic ruin piled,
Was theatre by Nature's hand
For feat of high achievement plann'd.

XI.

"O rather he chose, that Monarch bold,
On vent'rous quest to ride,
In plate and mail, by wood and wold,
Than, with ermine trapp'd and cloth of gold,
In princely bower to bide;
The bursting crash of a foeman's spear
As it shivered against his mail,
Was merrier music to his ear
Than courtier's whisper'd tale;
And the clash of Caliburn more dear,
When on the hostile casque it rung,
Than all the lays
To their monarch's praise
That the harpers of Reged sung.
He loved better to rest by wood or river,
Than in bower of his bride, Dame Guenever,
For he left that lady, so lovely of cheer,
To follow adventures of danger and fear;
And the frank-hearted Monarch full little wot,
That she smiled, in his absence, on brave Lancelot.

XII.

"He rode, till over down and dell
The shade more broad and deeper fell;
And though around the mountain's head
Flow'd streams of purple, and gold, and red,
Dark at the base, unblest by beam,
Frown'd the black rocks, and roar'd the stream.
With toil the King his way pursued
By lonely Threlkeld's waste and wood,
Till on his course obliquely shone
The narrow valley of SAINT JOHN,
Down sloping to the western sky,
Where lingering sunbeams love to lie.
Right glad to feel those beams again,
The King drew up his charger's rein;
With gauntlet raised he screen'd his sight,
As dazzled with the level light,
And, from beneath his glove of mail,
Scann'd at his ease the lovely vale,
While 'gainst the sun his armour bright
Gleam'd ruddy like the beacon's light.

XIII.

"Paled in by many a lofty hill,
The narrow dale lay smooth and still,
And, down its verdant bosom led,
A winding brooklet found its bed.
But, midmost of the vale, a mound
Arose with airy turrets crown'd,
Buttress, and rampire's circling bound,
And mighty keep and tower;
Seem'd some primeval giant's hand
The castle's massive walls had plann'd,
A ponderous bulwark to withstand
Ambitious Nimrod's power.
Above the moated entrance slung,
The balanced drawbridge trembling hung,
As jealous of a foe;
Wicket of oak, as iron hard,
With iron studded, clench'd, and barr'd,
And prong'd portcullis, join'd to guard
The gloomy pass below.
But the grey walls no banners crown'd,
Upon the watch-tower's airy round
No warder stood his horn to sound,
No guard beside the bridge was found,
And, where the Gothic gateway frown'd,
Glanced neither bill nor bow.

XIV.

"Beneath the castle's gloomy pride
In ample round did Arthur ride
Three times; nor living thing he spied,
Nor heard a living sound,
Save that, awakening from her dream,
The owlet now began to scream,
In concert with the rushing stream,
That wash'd the battled mound.
He lighted from his goodly steed,
And he left him to graze on bank and mead;
And slowly he climb'd the narrow way,
That reach'd the entrance grim and grey,
And he stood the outward arch below,
And his bugle-horn prepared to blow,
In summons blithe and bold,
Deeming to rouse from iron sleep
The guardian of this dismal Keep,
Which well he guess'd the hold

Of wizard stern, or goblin grim,
Or pagan of gigantic limb,
The tyrant of the wold.

XV.

"The ivory bugle's golden tip
Twice touch'd the Monarch's manly lip,
And twice his hand withdrew.
—Think not but Arthur's heart was good!
His shield was cross'd by the blessèd rood,
Had a pagan host before him stood,
He had charged them through and through;
Yet the silence of that ancient place
Sunk on his heart, and he paused a space
Ere yet his horn he blew.
But, instant as its 'larum rung,
The castle gate was open flung,
Portcullis rose with crashing groan
Full harshly up its groove of stone;
The balance-beams obey'd the blast,
And down the trembling drawbridge cast;
The vaulted arch before him lay,
With nought to bar the gloomy way,
And onward Arthur paced, with hand
On Caliburn's resistless brand.

XVI.

"A hundred torches, flashing bright,
Dispell'd at once the gloomy night
That lour'd along the walls,
And show'd the King's astonish'd sight
The inmates of the halls.
Nor wizard stern, nor goblin grim,
Nor giant huge of form and limb,
Nor heathen knight, was there;
But the cressets, which odours flung aloft,
Show'd by their yellow light and soft,
A band of damsels fair.
Onward they came, like summer wave
That dances to the shore;
An hundred voices welcome gave,
And welcome o'er and o'er!
An hundred lovely hands assail
The bucklers of the Monarch's mail,
And busy labour'd to unhasp
Rivet of steel and iron clasp.
One wrapp'd him in a mantle fair,
And one flung odours on his hair;
His short curl'd ringlets one smooth'd down,
One wreathed them with a myrtle crown.
A bride upon her wedding-day,
Was tended ne'er by troop so gay.

XVII.

"Loud laugh'd they all,—the King, in vain,
With questions task'd the giddy train;
Let him entreat, or crave, or call,
'Twas one reply,—loud laugh'd they all.
Then o'er him mimic chains they fling,
Framed of the fairest flowers of spring.
While some their gentle force unite,
Onward to drag the wondering knight;
Some, bolder, urge his pace with blows,
Dealt with the lily or the rose.
Behind him were in triumph borne
The warlike arms he late had worn.
Four of the train combined to rear
The terrors of Tintadgel's spear;
Two, laughing at their lack of strength,
Dragg'd Caliburn in cumbrous length;
One, while she aped a martial stride,
Placed on her brows the helmet's pride;
Then scream'd, 'twixt laughter and surprise,
To feel its depth o'erwhelm her eyes.
With revel-shout, and triumph-song,
Thus gaily march'd the giddy throng.

XVIII.

"Through many a gallery and hall
They led, I ween, their royal thrall;
At length, beneath a fair arcade
Their march and song at once they staid.
The eldest maiden of the band
(The lovely maid was scarce eighteen)
Raised, with imposing air, her hand,
And reverent silence did command,
On entrance of their Queen,
And they were mute.—But as a glance
They steal on Arthur's countenance,
Bewilder'd with surprise,
Their smother'd mirth again 'gan speak,
In archly dimpled chin and cheek,
And laughter-lighted eyes.

XIX.

"The attributes of those high days
Now only live in minstrel-lays;
For Nature, now exhausted, still
Was then profuse of good and ill.
Strength was gigantic, valour high,
And wisdom soar'd beyond the sky,
And beauty had such matchless beam
As lights not now a lover's dream.
Yet e'en in that romantic age, [seen,
Ne'er were such charms by mortal
As Arthur's dazzled eyes engage,
When forth on that enchanted stage,
With glittering train of maid and page,
Advanced the castle's Queen!
While up the hall she slowly pass'd,
Her dark eye on the King she cast,
That flash'd expression strong;
The longer dwelt that lingering look,
Her cheek the livelier colour took,
And scarce the shame-faced King could brook
The gaze that lasted long.
A sage, who had that look espied,
Where kindling passion strove with pride,
Had whisper'd, 'Prince, beware!

From the chafed tiger rend the prey,
Rush on the lion when at bay,
Bar the fell dragon's blighted way,
But shun that lovely snare!"

XX.

"At once that inward strife suppress'd,
The dame approach'd her warlike guest,
With greeting in that fair degree,
Where female pride and courtesy
Are blended with such passing art
As awes at once and charms the heart.
A courtly welcome first she gave,
Then of his goodness 'gan to crave
Construction fair and true
Of her light maidens' idle mirth,
Who drew from lonely glens their birth,
Nor knew to pay to stranger worth
And dignity their due;
And then she pray'd that he would rest
That night her castle's honour'd guest.
The Monarch meetly thanks express'd;
The banquet rose at her behest,
With lay and tale, and laugh and jest,
Apace the evening flew.

XXI.

"The Lady sate the Monarch by,
Now in her turn abash'd and shy,
And with indifference seem'd to hear
The toys he whisper'd in her ear.
Her bearing modest was and fair,
Yet shadows of constraint were there,
That show'd an over-cautious care
Some inward thought to hide;
Oft did she pause in full reply,
And oft cast down her large dark eye,
Oft check'd the soft voluptuous sigh
That heaved her bosom's pride.
Slight symptoms these, but shepherds know
How hot the mid-day sun shall glow,
From the mist of morning sky;
And so the wily Monarch guess'd
That this assumed restraint express'd
More ardent passions in the breast
Than ventured to the eye.
Closer he press'd, while beakers rang,
While maidens laugh'd and minstrels sang,
Still closer to her ear—
But why pursue the common tale?
Or wherefore show how knights prevail
When ladies dare to hear?
Or wherefore trace from what slight cause
Its source one tyrant passion draws,
Till, mastering all within,
Where lives the man that has not tried,
How mirth can into folly glide,
And folly into sin?"

CANTO SECOND.

I.

LYULPH'S TALE, CONTINUED.

"ANOTHER day, another day,
And yet another, glides away!
The Saxon stern, the pagan Dane,
Maraud on Britain's shores again.
Arthur, of Christendom the flower,
Lies loitering in a lady's bower;
The horn, that foemen wont to fear,
Sounds but to wake the Cumbrian deer,
And Caliburn, the British pride,
Hangs useless by a lover's side.

II.

"Another day, another day,
And yet another, glides away!
Heroic plans in pleasure drown'd,
He thinks not of the Table Round;
In lawless love dissolved his life,
He thinks not of his beauteous wife:
Better he loves to snatch a flower
From bosom of his paramour,
Than from a Saxon knight to wrest
The honours of his heathen crest!
Better to wreathe, 'mid tresses brown,
The heron's plume her hawk struck down,
Than o'er the altar give to flow
The banners of a Paynim foe.
Thus, week by week, and day by day,
His life inglorious glides away:
But she, that soothes his dream, with fear
Beholds his hour of waking near!

III.

"Much force have mortal charms to stay
Our peace in Virtue's toilsome way;
But Guendolen's might far outshine
Each maid of merely mortal line.
Her mother was of human birth,
Her sire a Genie of the earth,
In days of old deem'd to preside
O'er lovers' wiles and beauty's pride,
By youths and virgins worshipp'd long,
With festive dance and choral song,
Till, when the cross to Britain came,
On heathen altars died the flame.
Now, deep in Wastdale solitude,
The downfall of his rights he rued,
And, born of his resentment heir,
He train'd to guile that lady fair,
To sink in slothful sin and shame
The champions of the Christian name.
Well skill'd to keep vain thoughts alive,
And all to promise, nought to give,—
The timid youth had hope in store,
The bold and pressing gain'd no more.
As wilder'd children leave their home,
After the rainbow's arch to roam,
Her lovers barter'd fair esteem,
Faith, fame, and honour, for a dream.

IV.

"Her sire's soft arts the soul to tame
She practised thus—till Arthur came;
Then, frail humanity had part,
And all the mother claim'd her heart.
Forgot each rule her father gave,
Sunk from a princess to a slave,
Too late must Guendolen deplore,
He, that has all, can hope no more!
Now must she see her lover strain
At every turn her feeble ehain;
Watch, to new-bind each knot, and shrink
To view each fast-decaying link.
Art she invokes to Nature's aid,
Her vest to zone, her locks to braid;
Each varied pleasure heard her call,
The feast, the tourney, and the ball:
Her storied lore she next applies,
Taxing her mind to aid her eyes;
Now more than mortal wise, and then
In female softness sunk again;
Now, raptured, with each wish complying,
With feign'd reluctance now denying;
Each charm she varied, to retain
A varying heart—and all in vain!

V.

"Thus in the garden's narrow bound,
Flank'd by some castle's Gothic round,
Fain would the artist's skill provide,
The limits of his realms to hide.
The walks in labyrinths he twines,
Shade after shade with skill combines,
With many a varied flowery knot,
And copse, and arbour, decks the spot,
Tempting the hasty foot to stay,
And linger on the lovely way——
Vain art! vain hope! 'tis fruitless all!
At length we reach the bounding wall,
And, sick of flower and trim-dress'd tree,
Long for rough glades and forest free.

VI.

"Three summer months had scantly flown,
When Arthur, in embarrass'd tone,
Spoke of his liegemen and his throne;
Said, all too long had been his stay,
And duties, which a Monarch sway,
Duties, unknown to humbler men,
Must tear her knight from Guendolen.—
She listen'd silently the while,
Her mood express'd in bitter smile;
Beneath her eye must Arthur quail,
And oft resume the unfinish'd tale,
Confessing, by his downcast eye,
The wrong he sought to justify.
He ceased. A moment mute she gazed,
And then her looks to heaven she raised;
One palm her temples veil'd, to hide
The tear that sprung in spite of pride!
The other for an instant press'd
The foldings of her silken vest!

VII.

"At her reproachful sign and look,
The hint the Monarch's conscience took.
Eager he spoke—'No, lady, no!
Deem not of British Arthur so,
Nor think he can deserter prove
To the dear pledge of mutual love.
I swear by sceptre and by sword,
As belted knight and Britain's lord,
That if a boy shall claim my care,
That boy is born a kingdom's heir;
But, if a maiden Fate allows,
To choose that maid a fitting spouse,
A summer-day in lists shall strive
My knights,—the bravest knights alive,—
And he, the best and bravest tried,
Shall Arthur's daughter claim for bride.'—
He spoke, with voice resolved and high—
The lady deign'd him not reply.

VIII.

"At dawn of morn, ere on the brake
His matins did a warbler make,
Or stirr'd his wing to brush away
A single dew-drop from the spray,
Ere yet a sunbeam, through the mist,
The castle-battlements had kiss'd,
The gates revolve, the drawbridge falls,
And Arthur sallies from the walls.
Doff'd his soft garb of Persia's loom,
And steel from spur to helmet-plume,
His Libyan steed full proudly trode,
And joyful neigh'd beneath his load.
The Monarch gave a passing sigh
To penitence and pleasures by,
When, lo! to his astonish'd ken
Appear'd the form of Guendolen.

IX.

"Beyond the outmost wall she stood,
Attired like huntress of the wood:
Sandall'd her feet, her ankles bare,
And eagle-plumage deck'd her hair;
Firm was her look, her bearing bold,
And in her hand a cup of gold.
'Thou goest!' she said, 'and ne'er again
Must we two meet, in joy or pain.
Full fain would I this hour delay, [stay?
Though weak the wish—yet, wilt thou
—No! thou look'st forward. Still attend,—
Part we like lover and like friend.'
She raised the cup—'Not this the juice
The sluggish vines of earth produce;
Pledge we, at parting, in the draught
Which Genii love!'—she said, and quaff'd;
And strange unwonted lustres fly
From her flush'd cheek and sparkling eye.

X.

"The courteous Monarch bent him low,
And, stooping down from saddlebow,

Lifted the cup, in act to drink,
A drop escap'd the goblet's brink—
Intense as liquid fire from hell,
Upon the charger's neck it fell.
Screaming with agony and fright,
He bolted twenty feet upright—
—The peasant still can show the dint,
Where his hoofs lighted on the flint.—
From Arthur's hand the goblet flew,
Scattering a shower of fiery dew,*
That burn'd and blighted where it fell!
The frantic steed rush'd up the dell,
As whistles from the bow the reed;
Nor bit nor rein could check his speed,
Until he gain'd the hill;
Then breath and sinew fail'd apace,
And, reeling from the desperate race,
He stood, exhausted, still.
The Monarch, breathless and amazed,
Back on the fatal castle gazed——
Nor tower nor donjon could he spy,
Darkening against the morning sky;
But, on the spot where once they frown'd,
The lonely streamlet brawl'd around
A tufted knoll, where dimly shone
Fragments of rocks and rifted stone.
Musing on this strange hap the while,
The King wends back to fair Carlisle:
And cares, that cumber royal sway,
Wore memory of the past away.

XI.

"Full fifteen years, and more, were sped,
Each brought new wreaths to Arthur's head.
Twelve bloody fields, with glory fought,
The Saxons to subjection brought:
Rython, the mighty giant, slain
By his good brand, relieved Bretagne:
The Pictish Gillamore in fight,
And Roman Lucius, own'd his might;
And wide were through the world renown'd
The glories of his Table Round. [sought
Each knight who sought adventurous fame,
To the bold court of Britain came;
And all who suffer'd causeless wrong,
From tyrant proud, or faitour strong,
Sought Arthur's presence to complain,
Nor there for aid implored in vain.

XII.

"For this the King, with pomp and pride,
Held solemn court at Whitsuntide,
And summon'd Prince and Peer,
All who owed homage for their land,
Or who craved knighthood from his hand,
Or who had succour to demand,
To come from far and near.
At such high tide were glee and game
Mingled with feats of martial fame,
For many a stranger champion came,
In lists to break a spear;
And not a knight of Arthur's host,
Save that he trode some foreign coast,
But at this feast of Pentecost
Before him must appear.
Ah, Minstrels! when the Table Round
Arose, with all its warriors crown'd,
There was a theme for bards to sound
In triumph to their string!
Five hundred years are past and gone,
But Time shall draw his dying groan,
Ere he behold the British throne
Begirt with such a ring!

XIII.

"The heralds named the appointed spot,
As Caerleon or Camelot,
Or Carlisle fair and free.
At Penrith, now, the feast was set,
And in fair Eamont's vale were met
The flower of Chivalry.
There Galad sate with manly grace,
Yet maiden meekness in his face;
There Morolt of the iron mace,
And love-lorn Tristrem there:*
And Dinadam with lively glance,
And Lanval with the fairy lance,
And Mordred with his look askance,
Brunor and Bevidere.
Why should I tell of numbers more?
Sir Cay, Sir Banier, and Sir Bore,
Sir Carodac the keen,
The gentle Gawain's courteous lore,
Hector de Mares and Pellinore,
And Lancelot, that ever more
Look'd stol'n-wise on the Queen.

XIV.

"When wine and mirth did most abound,
And harpers play'd their blithest round,
A shrilly trumpet shook the ground,
And marshals clear'd the ring.
A maiden, on a palfrey white,
Heading a band of damsels bright,
Paced through the circle, to alight
And kneel before the King.
Arthur, with strong emotion, saw
Her graceful boldness check'd by awe,
Her dress, like huntress of the wold,
Her bow and baldric trapp'd with gold,
Her sandall'd feet, her ankles bare,
And the eagle-plume that deck'd her hair.
Graceful her veil she backward flung——
The King, as from his seat he sprung,
Almost cried, 'Guendolen!'
But 'twas a face more frank and wild,
Betwixt the woman and the child,
Where less of magic beauty smiled
Than of the race of men;
And in the forehead's haughty grace,
The lines of Britain's royal race,
Pendragon's you might ken.

XV.

"Faltering, yet gracefully, she said—
'Great Prince! behold an orphan maid,
In her departed mother's name,
A father's vow'd protection claim!
The vow was sworn in desert lone,
In the deep valley of Saint John.'
At once the King the suppliant raised,
And kiss'd her brow, her beauty praised;
His vow, he said, should well be kept,
Ere in the sea the sun was dipp'd,—
Then, conscious, glanced upon his queen;
But she, unruffled at the scene
Of human frailty, construed mild,
Look'd upon Lancelot and smiled.

XVI.

"'Up! up! each knight of gallant crest,
Take buckler, spear, and brand!
He that to-day shall bear him best,
Shall win my Gyneth's hand.
And Arthur's daughter, when a bride,
Shall bring a noble dower;
Both fair Strath-Clyde and Reged wide,
And Carlisle town and tower.'
Then might you hear each valiant knight,
To page and squire that cried, [wight!
'Bring my armour bright, and my courser
'Tis not each day that a warrior's might
May win a royal bride.'
Then cloaks and caps of maintenance
In haste aside they fling;
The helmets glance, and gleams the lance,
And the steel-weaved hauberks ring.
Small care had they of their peaceful array,
They might gather it that wolde;
For brake and bramble glitter'd gay,
With pearls and cloth of gold.

XVII.

"Within trumpet sound of the Table
Were fifty champions free, [Round
And they all arise to fight that prize,—
They all arise but three.
Nor love's fond troth, nor wedlock's oath,
One gallant could withhold,
For priests will allow of a broken vow,
For penance or for gold.
But sigh and glance from ladies bright
Among the troop were thrown,
To plead their right, and true-love plight,
And 'plain of honour flown.
The knights they busied them so fast,
With buckling spur and belt,
That sigh and look, by ladies cast,
Were neither seen nor felt.
From pleading or upbraiding glance,
Each gallant turns aside,
And only thought, 'If speeds my lance,
A queen becomes my bride!
She has fair Strath-Clyde, and Reged
And Carlisle tower and town; [wide,
She is the loveliest maid, beside,
That ever heir'd a crown.'
So in haste their coursers they bestride,
And strike their visors down.

XVIII.

"The champions, arm'd in martial sort,
Have throng'd into the list,
And but three knights of Arthur's court
Are from the tourney miss'd.
And still these lovers' fame survives
For faith so constant shown,—
There were two who loved their neighbour's wives,
And one who loved his own.
The first was Lancelot de Lac,
The second Tristrem bold,
The third was valiant Carodac,
Who won the cup of gold,
What time, of all King Arthur's crew
(Thereof came jeer and laugh),
He, as the mate of lady true,
Alone the cup could quaff.
Though envy's tongue would fain surmise,
That but for very shame,
Sir Carodac, to fight that prize,
Had given both cup and dame;
Yet, since but one of that fair court
Was true to wedlock's shrine,
Brand him who will with base report,—
He shall be free from mine.

XIX.

"Now caracoled the steeds in air,
Now plumes and pennons wanton'd fair,
As all around the lists so wide,
In panoply the champions ride.
King Arthur saw with startled eye,
The flower of chivalry march by,
The bulwark of the Christian creed,
The kingdom's shield in hour of need.
Too late he thought him of the woe
Might from their civil conflict flow;
For well he knew they would not part
Till cold was many a gallant heart.
His hasty vow he 'gan to rue,
And Gyneth then apart he drew;
To her his leading-staff resign'd,
But added caution grave and kind.

XX.

"'Thou see'st, my child, as promise-bound,
I bid the trump for tourney sound.
Take thou my warder as the queen
And umpire of the martial scene;
But mark thou this:—as Beauty bright
Is polar star to valiant knight,
As at her word his sword he draws,
His fairest guerdon her applause,
So gentle maid should never ask
Of knighthood vain and dangerous task;
And Beauty's eyes should ever be
Like the twin stars that soothe the sea,

And Beauty's breath shall whisper peace,
And bid the storm of battle cease.
I tell thee this, lest all too far,
These knights urge tourney into war.
Blithe at the trumpet let them go,
And fairly counter blow for blow;—
No striplings these, who succour need
For a razed helm or falling steed.
But, Gyneth, when the strife grows warm,
And threatens death or deadly harm,
Thy sire entreats, thy king commands,
Thou drop the warder from thy hands.
Trust thou thy father with thy fate,
Doubt not he choose thee fitting mate;
Nor be it said, through Gyneth's pride,
A rose of Arthur's chaplet died.'

XXI.

"A proud and discontented glow
O'ershadowed Gyneth's brow of snow;
She put the warder by:—
'Reserve thy boon, my liege,' she said,
'Thus chaffer'd down and limited,
Debased and narrow'd, for a maid
Of less degree than I.
No petty chief but holds his heir
At a more honour'd price and rare
Than Britain's King holds me!
Although the sunburn'd maid, for dower,
Has but her father's rugged tower,
His barren hill and lee.—
King Arthur swore, "By crown and sword,
As belted knight and Britain's lord,
That a whole summer's day should strive
His knights, the bravest knights alive!"
Recall thine oath! and to her glen
Poor Gyneth can return agen;
Not on thy daughter will the stain
That soils thy sword and crown remain.
But think not she will e'er be bride
Save to the bravest, proved and tried;
Pendragon's daughter will not fear
For clashing sword or splinter'd spear,
Nor shrink though blood should flow;
And all too well sad Guendolen
Hath taught the faithlessness of men,
That child of hers should pity, when
Their meed they undergo.'—

XXII.

"He frown'd and sigh'd, the Monarch bold:—
'I give—what I may not withhold;
For, not for danger, dread, or death,
Must British Arthur break his faith.
Too late I mark, thy mother's art
Hath taught thee this relentless part.
I blame her not, for she had wrong,
But not to these my faults belong.
Use, then, the warder as thou wilt;
But trust me, that, if life be spilt,
In Arthur's love, in Arthur's grace,
Gyneth shall lose a daughter's place.'
With that he turn'd his head aside,
Nor brook'd to gaze upon her pride,
As, with the truncheon raised, she sate
The arbitress of mortal fate;
Nor brook'd to mark, in ranks disposed,
How the bold champions stood opposed,
For shrill the trumpet-flourish fell
Upon his ear like passing bell!
Then first from sight of martial fray
Did Britain's hero turn away.

XXIII.

"But Gyneth heard the clangour high,
As hears the hawk the partridge cry.
Oh, blame her not! the blood was hers,
That at the trumpet's summons stirs!—
And e'en the gentlest female eye
Might the brave strife of chivalry
A while untroubled view;
So well accomplish'd was each knight,
To strike and to defend in fight,
Their meeting was a goodly sight,
While plate and mail held true.
The lists with painted plumes were strown,
Upon the wind at random thrown,
But helm and breastplate bloodless shone,
It seem'd their feather'd crests alone
Should this encounter rue.
And ever, as the combat grows,
The trumpet's cheery voice arose,
Like lark's shrill song the flourish flows,
Heard while the gale of April blows
The merry greenwood through.

XXIV.

"But soon to earnest grew their game;
The spears drew blood, the swords struck flame,
And, horse and man, to ground there came
Knights, who shall rise no more!
Gone was the pride the war that graced,
Gay shields were cleft, and crests defaced,
And steel coats riven, and helms unbraced,
And pennons stream'd with gore.
Gone, too, were fence and fair array,
And desperate strength made deadly way
At random through the bloody fray,
And blows were dealt with headlong sway,
Unheeding where they fell;
And now the trumpet's clamours seem
Like the shrill sea-bird's wailing scream,
Heard o'er the whirlpool's gulfing stream,
The sinking seaman's knell!

XXV.

"Seem'd in this dismal hour, that Fate
Would Camlan's ruin antedate,
And spare dark Mordred's crime;
Already gasping on the ground
Lie twenty of the Table Round,
Of chivalry the p

Arthur, in anguish, tore away
From head and beard his tresses grey,
And she, proud Gyneth, felt dismay,
And quaked with ruth and fear;
But still she deem'd her mother's shade
Hung o'er the tumult, and forbade
The sign that had the slaughter staid,
And chid the rising tear.
Then Brunor, Taulas, Mador, fell,
Helias the White, and Lionel,
And many a champion more;
Rochemont and Dinadam are down,
And Ferrand of the Forest Brown
Lies gasping in his gore.
Vanoc, by mighty Morolt press'd
Even to the confines of the list,
Young Vanoc of the beardless face
(Fame spoke the youth of Merlin's race),
O'erpower'd at Gyneth's footstool bled,
His heart's-blood dyed her sandals red.
But then the sky was overcast.
Then howl'd at once a whirlwind's blast,
And, rent by sudden throes,
Yawn'd in mid lists the quaking earth,
And from the gulf,—tremendous birth!—
The form of Merlin rose.

XXVI.

"Sternly the Wizard Prophet eyed
The dreary lists with slaughter dyed,
And sternly raised his hand:—
'Madmen,' he said, 'your strife forbear;
And thou, fair cause of mischief, hear
The doom thy fates demand!
Long shall close in stony sleep
Eyes for ruth that would not weep;
Iron lethargy shall seal
Heart that pity scorn'd to feel.
Yet, because thy mother's art
Warp'd thine unsuspicious heart,
And for love of Arthur's race,
Punishment is blent with grace,
Thou shalt bear thy penance lone
In the Valley of Saint John,
And this weird shall overtake thee;
Sleep, until a knight shall wake thee,
For feats of arms as far renown'd
As warrior of the Table Round.
Long endurance of thy slumber
Well may teach the world to number
All their woes from Gyneth's pride,
When the Red Cross champions died.'

XXVII.

"As Merlin speaks, on Gyneth's eye
Slumber's load begins to lie;
Fear and anger vainly strive
Still to keep its light alive.
Twice, with effort and with pause,
O'er her brow her hand she draws;
Twice her strength in vain she tries
From the fatal chair to rise,
Merlin's magic doom is spoken,
Vanoc's death must now be wroken.
Slow the dark-fringed eyelids fall,
Curtaining each azure ball,
Slowly as on summer eves
Violets fold their dusky leaves.
The weighty baton of command
Now bears down her sinking hand,
On her shoulder droops her head;
Net of pearl and golden thread,
Bursting, gave her locks to flow
O'er her arm and breast of snow.
And so lovely seem'd she there,
Spell-bound in her ivory chair,
That her angry sire, repenting,
Craved stern Merlin for relenting,
And the champions, for her sake,
Would again the contest wake;
Till, in necromantic night,
Gyneth vanish'd from their sight.

XXVIII.

"Still she bears her weird alone
In the Valley of Saint John;
And her semblance oft will seem,
Mingling in a champion's dream,
Of her weary lot to 'plain,
And crave his aid to burst her chain.
While her wondrous tale was new,
Warriors to her rescue drew,
East and west, and south and north,
From the Liffey, Thames, and Forth.
Most have sought in vain the glen,
Tower nor castle could they ken;
Not at every time or tide,
Nor by every eye, descried.
Fast and vigil must be borne,
Many a night in watching worn,
Ere an eye of mortal powers
Can discern those magic towers.
Of the persevering few,
Some from hopeless task withdrew,
When they read the dismal threat
Graved upon the gloomy gate.
Few have braved the yawning door,
And those few return'd no more.
In the lapse of time forgot,
Wellnigh lost is Gyneth's lot;
Sound her sleep as in the tomb,
Till waken'd by the trump of doom."

END OF LYULPH'S TALE.

Here pause my tale; for all too soon,
My Lucy, comes the hour of noon.
Already from thy lofty dome
Its courtly inmates 'gin to roam,
And each, to kill the goodly day
That God has granted them, his way
Of lazy sauntering has sought;
Lordlings and witlings not a few,

Incapable of doing aught,
Yet ill at ease with nought to do.
Here is no longer place for me;
For, Lucy, thou wouldst blush to see
Some phantom, fashionably thin,
With limb of lath and kerchief'd chin,
And lounging gape, or sneering grin,
Steal sudden on our privacy.
And how should I, so humbly born,
Endure the graceful spectre's scorn?
Faith! ill, I fear, while conjuring wand
Of English oak is hard at hand.

II.

Or grant the hour be all too soon
For Hessian boot and pantaloon,
And grant the lounger seldom strays
Beyond the smooth and gravell'd maze,
Laud we the gods, that Fashion's train
Holds hearts of more adventurous strain.
Artists are hers, who scorn to trace
Their rules from Nature's boundless grace,
But their right paramount assert
To limit her by pedant art,
Damning whate'er of vast and fair
Exceeds a canvas three feet square.
This thicket, for their *gumption* fit,
May furnish such a happy *bit*.
Bards, too, are hers, wont to recite
Their own sweet lays by waxen light,
Half in the salver's tingle drown'd,
While the *chasse-café* glides around;
And such may hither secret stray,
To labour an extempore:
Or sportsman, with his boisterous hollo,
May here his wiser spaniel follow,
Or stage-struck Juliet may presume
To choose this bower for tiring-room;
And we alike must shun regard,
From painter, player, sportsman, bard.
Insects that skim in Fashion's sky,
Wasp, blue-bottle, or butterfly,
Lucy, have all alarms for us,
For all can hum and all can buzz.

III.

But oh, my Lucy, say how long
We still must dread this trifling throng,
And stoop to hide, with coward art,
The genuine feelings of the heart!
No parents thine whose just command
Should rule their child's obedient hand;
Thy guardians, with contending voice,
Press each his individual choice.
And which is Lucy's?—Can it be
That puny fop, trimm'd cap-a-pee,
Who loves in the saloon to show
The arms that never knew a foe;
Whose sabre trails along the ground,
Whose legs in shapeless boots are drown'd;
A new Achilles, sure,—the steel
Fled from his breast to fence his heel;
One, for the simple manly grace
That wont to deck our martial race,
Who comes in foreign trashery
Of tinkling chain and spur,
A walking haberdashery
Of feathers, lace, and fur:
In Rowley's antiquated phrase,
Horse-milliner of modern days?

IV.

Or is it he, the wordy youth,
So early train'd for statesman's part,
Who talks of honour, faith, and truth,
As themes that he has got by heart;
Whose ethics Chesterfield can teach,
Whose logic is from Single-speech;
Who scorns the meanest thought to vent,
Save in the phrase of Parliament;
Who, in a tale of cat and mouse,
Calls "order," and "divides the house,"
Who "craves permission to reply,"
Whose "noble friend is in his eye;"
Whose loving tender some have reckon'd
A *motion*, you should gladly *second*?

V.

What, neither? Can there be a third,
To such resistless swains preferr'd?—
O why, my Lucy, turn aside,
With that quick glance of injured pride?
Forgive me, love, I cannot bear
That alter'd and resentful air.
Were all the wealth of Russel mine,
And all the rank of Howard's line,
All would I give for leave to dry
That dewdrop trembling in thine eye.
Think not I fear such fops can wile
From Lucy more than careless smile;
But yet if wealth and high degree
Give gilded counters currency,
Must I not fear, when rank and birth
Stamp the pure ore of genuine worth?
Nobles there are, whose martial fires
Rival the fame that raised their sires,
And patriots, skill'd through storms of fate
To guide and guard the reeling state.
Such, such there are—If such should come,
Arthur must tremble and be dumb,
Self-exiled seek some distant shore,
And mourn till life and grief are o'er.

VI.

What sight, what signal of alarm,
That Lucy clings to Arthur's arm?
Or is it that the rugged way
Makes Beauty lean on lover's stay?
Oh, no! for on the vale and brake
Nor sight nor sounds of danger wake,
And this trim sward of velvet green
Were carpet for the Fairy Queen.
That pressure slight was but to tell
That Lucy loves her Arthur well,

And fain would banish from his mind
Suspicious fear and doubt unkind.

VII.

But wouldst thou bid the demons fly
Like mist before the dawning sky,
There is but one resistless spell—
Say, wilt thou guess, or must I tell?
'Twere hard to name, in minstrel phrase,
A landaulet and four blood-bays,
But bards agree this wizard band
Can but be bound in Northern land.
'Tis there—nay, draw not back thy hand!—
'Tis there, this slender finger round
Must golden amulet be bound,
Which, bless'd with many a holy prayer,
Can change to rapture lovers' care,
And doubt and jealousy shall die,
And fears give place to ecstasy.

VIII.

Now, trust me, Lucy, all too long
Has been thy lover's tale and song.
O, why so silent, love, I pray?
Have I not spoke the livelong day?
And will not Lucy deign to say
One word her friend to bless?
I ask but one—a simple sound,
Within three little letters bound,
O, let the word be YES!

CANTO THIRD.

INTRODUCTION.

I.

Long loved, long woo'd, and lately won,
My life's best hope, and now mine own!
Doth not this rude and Alpine glen
Recall our favourite haunts agen?
A wild resemblance we can trace,
Though reft of every softer grace,
As the rough warrior's brow may bear
A likeness to a sister fair.
Full well advised our Highland host,
That this wild pass on foot be cross'd,
While round Ben-Cruach's mighty base
Wheel the slow steeds and lingering chaise.
The keen old carle, with Scottish pride,
He praised his glen and mountains wide;
An eye he bears for nature's face,
Ay, and for woman's lovely grace.
Even in such mean degree we find
The subtle Scot's observing mind;
For, nor the chariot nor the train
Could gape of vulgar wonder gain,
But when old Allan would expound
Of Beal-na-paish the Celtic sound,
His bonnet doff'd, and bow, applied
His legend to my bonny bride;
While Lucy blush'd beneath his eye,
Courteous and cautious, shrewd and sly.

II.

Enough of him.—Now, ere we lose
Plunged in the vale, the distant views,
Turn thee, my love! look back once more
To the blue lake's retiring shore.
On its smooth breast the shadows seem
Like objects in a morning dream,
What time the slumberer is aware
He sleeps, and all the vision's air:
Even so, on yonder liquid lawn,
In hues of bright reflection drawn,
Distinct the shaggy mountains lie,
Distinct the rocks, distinct the sky;
The summer-clouds so plain we note,
That we might count each dappled spot:
We gaze and we admire, yet know
The scene is all delusive show.
Such dreams of bliss would Arthur draw,
When first his Lucy's form he saw;
Yet sigh'd and sicken'd as he drew,
Despairing they could e'er prove true!

III.

But, Lucy, turn thee now, to view
Up the fair glen, our destined way:
The fairy path that we pursue,
Distinguish'd but by greener hue,
Winds round the purple brae,
While Alpine flowers of varied dye
For carpet serve, or tapestry.
See how the little runnels leap,
In threads of silver, down the steep,
To swell the brooklet's moan!
Seems that the Highland Naiad grieves,
Fantastic while her crown she weaves,
Of rowan, birch, and alder-leaves,
So lovely, and so lone.
There's no illusion there; these flowers,
That wailing brook, these lovely bowers,
Are, Lucy, all our own;
And, since thine Arthur call'd thee wife,
Such seems the prospect of his life,
A lovely path, on-winding still,
By gurgling brook and sloping hill.
'Tis true, that mortals cannot tell
What waits them in the distant dell;
But be it hap, or be it harm,
We tread the pathway arm in arm.

IV.

And now, my Lucy, wot'st thou why
I could thy bidding twice deny,
When twice you pray'd I would again
Resume the legendary strain
Of the bold knight of Triermain?
At length yon peevish vow you swore,
That you would sue to me no more,
Until the minstrel fit drew near,
And made me prize a listening ear.
But, loveliest, when thou first didst pray
Continuance of the knightly lay,
Was it not on the happy day

That made thy hand mine own?
When, dazed with mine ecstasy,
Nought past, or present, or to be,
Could I or think on, hear, or see,
Save, Lucy, thee alone!
A giddy draught my rapture was,
As ever chemist's magic gas.

V.

Again the summons I denied
In yon fair capital of Clyde:
My Harp—or let me rather choose
The good old classic form—my Muse
(For Harp's an over-scutchèd phrase,
Worn out by bards of modern days),
My Muse, then—seldom will she wake,
Save by dim wood and silent lake;
She is the wild and rustic Maid,
Whose foot unsandall'd loves to tread
Where the soft greensward is inlaid
With varied moss and thyme;
And, lest the simple lily-braid,
That coronets her temples, fade,
She hides her still in greenwood shade,
To meditate her rhyme.

VI.

And now she comes! The murmur dear
Of the wild brook hath caught her ear,
The glade hath won her eye;
She longs to join with each blithe rill
That dances down the Highland hill,
Her blither melody.
And now, my Lucy's way to cheer,
She bids Ben-Cruach's echoes hear
How closed the tale, my love whilere
Loved for its chivalry.
List how she tells, in notes of flame,
"Child Roland to the dark tower came."

CANTO THIRD.

I.

BEWCASTLE now must keep the Hold,
Speir-Adam's steed must bide in stall,
Of Hartley-burn the bowmen bold
Must only shoot from battled wall;
And Liddesdale may buckle spur,
And Teviot now may belt the brand,
Taras and Ewes keep nightly stir,
And Eskdale foray Cumberland.
Of wasted fields and plunder'd flocks
The Borderers bootless may complain;
They lack the sword of brave De Vaux,
There comes no aid from Triermain.
That lord, on high adventure bound,
Hath wander'd forth alone,
And day and night keeps watchful round
In the valley of Saint John.

II.

When first began his vigil bold,
The moon twelve summer nights was old,
And shone both fair and full;
High in the vault of cloudless blue,
O'er streamlet, dale, and rock, she threw
Her light composed and cool.
Stretch'd on the brown hill's heathy breast,
Sir Roland eyed the vale;
Chief where, distinguish'd from the rest,
Those clustering rocks uprear'd their crest,
The dwelling of the fair distress'd,
As told grey Lyulph's tale.
Thus as he lay, the lamp of night
Was quivering on his armour bright,
In beams that rose and fell,
And danced upon his buckler's boss,
That lay beside him on the moss,
As on a crystal well.

III.

Ever he watch'd, and oft he deem'd,
While on the mound the moonlight stream'd,
It alter'd to his eyes;
Fain would he hope the rocks 'gan change
To buttress'd walls their shapeless range,
Fain think, by transmutation strange,
He saw grey turrets rise.
But scarce his heart with hope throbb'd high,
Before the wild illusions fly,
Which fancy had conceived,
Abetted by an anxious eye
That long'd to be deceived.
It was a fond deception all,
Such as, in solitary hall,
Beguiles the musing eye,
When, gazing on the sinking fire,
Bulwark, and battlement, and spire,
In the red gulf we spy.
For, seen by moon of middle night,
Or by the blaze of noontide bright,
Or by the dawn of morning light,
Or evening's western flame,
In every tide, at every hour,
In mist, in sunshine, and in shower,
The rocks remain'd the same.

IV.

Oft has he traced the charmèd mound,
Oft climb'd its crest, or paced it round,
Yet nothing might explore,
Save that the crags so rudely piled,
At distance seen, resemblance wild
To a rough fortress bore.
Yet still his watch the Warrior keeps,
Feeds hard and spare, and seldom sleeps,
And drinks but of the well;
Ever by day he walks the hill,
And when the evening gale is chill,
He seeks a rocky cell,
Like hermit poor to bid his bead,
And tell his Ave and his Creed,
Invoking every saint at need,
For aid to burst his spell.

V.

And now the moon her orb has hid,
And dwindled to a silver thread,
Dim seen in middle heaven,
While o'er its curve careering fast,
Before the fury of the blast
The midnight clouds are driven.
The brooklet raved, for on the hills
The upland showers had swoln the rills,
And down the torrents came;
Mutter'd the distant thunder dread,
And frequent o'er the vale was spread
A sheet of lightning flame.
De Vaux, within his mountain cave
(No human step the storm durst brave),
To moody meditation gave
Each faculty of soul,
Till, lull'd by distant torrent sound,
And the sad winds that whistled round,
Upon his thoughts, in musing drown'd,
A broken slumber stole.

VI.

'Twas then was heard a heavy sound
(Sound strange and fearful there to hear,
'Mongst desert hills, where, leagues around,
Dwelt but the gorcock and the deer):
As, starting from his couch of fern,
Again he heard in clangour stern,
That deep and solemn swell,—
Twelve times, in measured tone, it spoke,
Like some proud minster's pealing clock,
Or city's 'larum-bell.
What thought was Roland's first when fell,
In that deep wilderness, the knell
Upon his startled ear?
To slander warrior were I loth,
Yet must I hold my minstrel troth,—
It was a thought of fear.

VII.

But lively was the mingled thrill
That chased that momentary chill,
For Love's keen wish was there,
And eager Hope, and Valour high,
And the proud glow of Chivalry,
That burn'd to do and dare.
Forth from the cave the Warrior rush'd,
Long ere the mountain-voice was hush'd,
That answer'd to the knell;
For long and far the unwonted sound,
Eddying in echoes round and round,
Was toss'd from fell to fell;
And Glaramara answer flung,
And Grisdale-pike responsive rung,
And Legbert heights their echoes swung,
As far as Derwent's dell.

VIII.

Forth upon trackless darkness gazed
The Knight, bedeafen'd and amazed,
Till all was hush'd and still,
Save the swoln torrent's sullen roar,
And the night-blast that wildly bore
Its course along the hill.
Then on the northern sky there came
A light, as of reflected flame,
And over Legbert-head,
As if by magic art controll'd,
A mighty meteor slowly roll'd
Its orb of fiery red;
Thou wouldst have thought some demon dire
Came mounted on that car of fire,
To do his errand dread.
Far on the sloping valley's course,
On thicket, rock, and torrent hoarse,
Shingle and Scrae, and Fell and Force,
A dusky light arose:
Display'd, yet alter'd, was the scene;
Dark rock, and brook of silver sheen,
Even the gay thicket's summer green,
In bloody tincture glows.

IX.

De Vaux had mark'd the sunbeams set,
At eve, upon the coronet
Of that enchanted mound,
And seen but crags at random flung,
That, o'er the brawling torrent hung,
In desolation frown'd.
What sees he by that meteor's lour?—
A banner'd Castle, keep, and tower,
Return the lurid gleam,
With battled walls and buttress fast,
And barbican and ballium vast,
And airy flanking towers, that cast
Their shadows on the stream.
'Tis no deceit!—distinctly clear
Crenell and parapet appear,
While o'er the pile that meteor drear
Makes momentary pause;
Then forth its solemn path it drew,
And fainter yet and fainter grew
Those gloomy towers upon the view,
As its wild light withdraws.

X.

Forth from the cave did Roland rush,
O'er crag and stream, through brier and bush;
Yet far he had not sped,
Ere sunk was that portentous light
Behind the hills, and utter night
Was on the valley spread.
He paused perforce, and blew his horn,
And, on the mountain-echoes borne,
Was heard an answering sound,
A wild and lonely trumpet-note,—
In middle-air it seem'd to float
High o'er the battled mound;
And sounds were heard, as when a guard
Of some proud castle, holding ward,
Pace forth their nightly round.
The valiant Knight of Triermain
Rung forth his challenge-blast again,

But answer came there none;
And 'mid the mingled wind and rain,
Darkling he sought the vale in vain,
Until the dawning shone;
And when it dawn'd, that wondrous sight,
Distinctly seen by meteor light,
It all had pass'd away!
And that enchanted mount once more
A pile of granite fragments bore,
As at the close of day.

XI.

Steel'd for the deed, De Vaux's heart
Scorn'd from his vent'rous quest to part.
He walks the vale once more;
But only sees, by night or day,
That shatter'd pile of rocks so grey,
Hears but the torrent's roar.
Till when, through hills of azure borne,
The moon renew'd her silver horn,
Just at the time her waning ray
Had faded in the dawning day,
A summer mist arose;
Adown the vale the vapours float,
And cloudy undulations moat
That tufted mound of mystic note,
As round its base they close.
And higher now the fleecy tide
Ascends its stern and shaggy side,
Until the airy billows hide
The rock's majestic isle;
It seem'd a veil of filmy lawn,
By some fantastic fairy drawn
Around enchanted pile.

XII.

The breeze came softly down the brook,
And, sighing as it blew,
The veil of silver mist it shook,
And to De Vaux's eager look
Renew'd that wondrous view.
For, though the loitering vapour braved
The gentle breeze, yet oft it waved
Its mantle's dewy fold;
And still, when shook that filmy screen,
Were towers and bastions dimly seen,
And Gothic battlements between
Their gloomy length unroll'd.
Speed, speed, De Vaux, ere on thine eye
Once more the fleeting vision die!
—The gallant knight 'gan speed
As prompt and light as, when the hound
Is opening, and the horn is wound,
Careers the hunter's steed.
Down the steep dell his course amain
Hath rivall'd archer's shaft;
But ere the mound he could attain,
The rocks their shapeless form regain,
And, mocking loud his labour vain,
The mountain spirits laugh'd.
Far up the echoing dell was borne
Their wild unearthly shout of scorn.

XIII.

Wroth wax'd the Warrior.—"Am I then
Fool'd by the enemies of men,
Like a poor hind, whose homeward way
Is haunted by malicious fay?
Is Triermain become your taunt,
De Vaux your scorn? False fiends,
A weighty curtal-axe he bare; [avaunt!"
The baleful blade so bright and square,
And the tough shaft of heben wood,
Were oft in Scottish gore imbrued.
Backward his stately form he drew,
And at the rocks the weapon threw,
Just where one crag's projected crest
Hung proudly balanced o'er the rest.
Hurl'd with main force, the weapon's shock
Rent a huge fragment of the rock.
If by mere strength, 'twere hard to tell,
Or if the blow dissolved some spell,
But down the headlong ruin came,
With cloud of dust and flash of flame.
Down bank, o'er bush, its course was
borne,
Crush'd lay the copse, the earth was torn,
Till staid at length, the ruin dread
Cumber'd the torrent's rocky bed,
And bade the waters' high-swoln tide
Seek other passage for its pride.

XIV.

When ceased that thunder, Triermain
Survey'd the mound's rude front again;
And, lo! the ruin had laid bare,
Hewn in the stone, a winding stair,
Whose moss'd and fractured steps might
The means the summit to ascend; [lend
And by whose aid the brave De Vaux
Began to scale these magic rocks,
And soon a platform won,
Where, the wild witchery to close,
Within three lances' length arose
The Castle of Saint John!
No misty phantom of the air,
No meteor-blazon'd show was there;
In morning splendour, full and fair,
The massive fortress shone.

XV.

Embattled high and proudly tower'd,
Shaded by pond'rous flankers, lower'd
The portal's gloomy way.
Though for six hundred years and more,
Its strength had brook'd the tempest's roar,
The scutcheon'd emblems which it bore
Had suffer'd no decay:
But from the eastern battlement
A turret had made sheer descent,
And, down in recent ruin rent,
In the mid-torrent lay.
Else, o'er the Castle's brow sublime,
Insults of violence or of time
Unfelt had passed away.

In shapeless characters of yore,
The gate this stern inscription bore:—

XVI.

INSCRIPTION.

"Patience waits the destined day,
Strength can clear the cumber'd way.
Warrior, who hast waited long,
Firm of soul, of sinew strong,
It is given thee to gaze
On the pile of ancient days.
Never mortal builder's hand
This enduring fabric plann'd;
Sign and sigil, word of power,
From the earth raised keep and tower.
View it o'er, and pace it round,
Rampart, turret, battled mound.
Dare no more! To cross the gate
Were to tamper with thy fate:
Strength and fortitude were vain,
View it o'er—and turn again."—

XVII.

"That would I," said the Warrior bold,
"If that my frame were bent and old,
And my thin blood dropp'd slow and cold
As icicle in thaw;
But while my heart can feel it dance,
Blithe as the sparkling wine of France,
And this good arm wields sword or lance,
I mock these words of awe!"
He said; the wicket felt the sway
Of his strong hand, and straight gave way,
And, with rude crash and jarring bray,
The rusty bolts withdraw;
But o'er the threshold as he strode,
And forward took the vaulted road,
An unseen arm, with force amain,
The ponderous gate flung close again,
And rusted bolt and bar
Spontaneous took their place once more
While the deep arch with sullen roar
Returned their surly jar.
"Now closed is the gin and the prey within,
By the Rood of Lanercost!
But he that would win the war-wolf's skin,
May rue him of his boast."
Thus muttering, on the Warrior went,
By dubious light down deep descent.

XVIII.

Unbarr'd, unlock'd, unwatch'd, a port
Led to the Castle's outer court:
There the main fortress, broad and tall,
Spread its long range of bower and hall,
And towers of varied size,
Wrought with each ornament extreme,
That Gothic art, in wildest dream
Of fancy, could devise;
But full between the Warrior's way
And the main portal arch, there lay
An inner moat;
Nor bridge nor boat
Affords De Vaux the means to cross
The clear, profound, and silent fosse.
His arms aside in haste he flings,
Cuirass of steel and hauberk rings,
And down falls helm, and down the shield,
Rough with the dints of many a field.
Fair was his manly form, and fair
His keen dark eye, and close-curl'd hair,
When, all unarm'd, save that the brand
Of well-proved metal graced his hand,
With naught to fence his dauntless breast
But the close gipon's under-vest,
Whose sullied buff the sable stains
Of hauberk and of mail retains,—
Roland De Vaux upon the brim
Of the broad moat stood prompt to swim.

XIX.

Accoutred thus he dared the tide,
And soon he reached the farther side,
And enter'd soon the Hold,
And paced a hall, whose walls so wide
Were blazon'd all with feats of pride,
By warriors done of old.
In middle lists they counter'd here,
While trumpets seem'd to blow;
And there, in den or desert drear,
They quell'd gigantic foe,
Braved the fierce griffon in his ire,
Or faced the dragon's breath of fire.
Strange in their arms, and strange in face,
Heroes they seem'd of ancient race,
Whose deeds of arms, and race, and name,
Forgotten long by later fame,
Were here depicted, to appal
Those of an age degenerate,
Whose bold intrusion brave their fate
In this enchanted hall.
For some short space the venturous knight
With these high marvels fed his sight,
Then sought the chamber's upper end,
Where three broad easy steps ascend
To an arch'd portal door,
In whose broad folding leaves of state
Was framed a wicket window-grate,
And, ere he ventured more,
The gallant Knight took earnest view
The grated wicket-window through.

XX.

O, for his arms! Of martial weed
Had never mortal Knight such need!—
He spied a stately gallery; all
Of snow-white marble was the wall,
The vaulting, and the floor;
And, contrast strange! on either hand
There stood array'd in sable band
Four Maids whom Afric bore;
And each a Libyan tiger led,
Held by as bright and frail a thread
As Lucy's golden hair,—

For the leash that bound these monsters
Was but of gossamer. [dread
Each Maiden's short barbaric vest
Left all unclosed the knee and breast,
And limbs of shapely jet;
White was their vest and turban's fold,
On arms and ankles rings of gold
In savage pomp were set;
A quiver on their shoulders lay,
And in their hand an assagay.
Such and so silent stood they there,
That Roland wellnigh hoped
He saw a band of statues rare,
Station'd the gazer's soul to scare;
But when the wicket oped,
Each grisly beast 'gan upward draw,
Roll'd his grim eye, and spread his claw,
Scented the air, and lick'd his jaw;
While these weird maids, in Moorish tongue,
A wild and dismal warning sung.

XXI.

"Rash Adventurer, bear thee back!
Dread the spell of Dahomay!
Fear the race of Zaharak,
Daughters of the burning day!

"When the whirlwind's gusts are wheeling,
Ours it is the dance to braid;
Zarah's sands in pillars reeling,
Join the measure that we tread,
When the Moon has donn'd her cloak,
And the stars are red to see,
Shrill when pipes the sad Siroc,
Music meet for such as we.

"Where the shatter'd columns lie,
Showing Carthage once had been,
If the wandering Santon's eye
Our mysterious rites hath seen,—
Oft he cons the prayer of death,
To the nations preaches doom,
'Azrael's brand hath left the sheath!
Moslems, think upon the tomb!'

"Ours the scorpion, ours the snake,
Ours the hydra of the fen,
Ours the tiger of the brake,
All that plague the sons of men.
Ours the tempest's midnight wrack,
Pestilence that wastes by day—
Dread the race of Zaharak!
Fear the spell of Dahomay!"

XXII.

Uncouth and strange the accents shrill
Rung those vaulted roofs among,
Long it was ere, faint and still,
Died the far resounding song.
While yet the distant echoes roll,
The Warrior communed with his soul.

"When first I took this venturous quest,
I swore upon the rood,
Neither to stop, nor turn, nor rest,
For evil or for good.
My forward path too well I ween,
Lies yonder fearful ranks between!
For man unarm'd, 'tis bootless hope
With tigers and with fiends to cope—
Yet, if I turn, what waits me there,
Save famine dire and fell despair?—
Other conclusion let me try,
Since, choose howe'er I list, I die.
Forward, lies faith and knightly fame;
Behind, are perjury and shame.
In life or death I hold my word!"
With that he drew his trusty sword,
Caught down a banner from the wall,
And enter'd thus the fearful hall.

XXIII.

On high each wayward Maiden threw
Her swarthy arm, with wild halloo!
On either side a tiger sprung—
Against the leftward foe he flung
The ready banner, to engage
With tangling folds the brutal rage;
The right-hand monster in mid air
He struck so fiercely and so fair,
Through gullet and through spinal bone,
The trenchant blade had sheerly gone.
His grisly brethren ramp'd and yell'd,
But the slight leash their rage withheld,
Whilst, 'twixt their ranks, the dangerous road
Firmly, though swift, the champion strode.
Safe to the gallery's bound he drew,
Safe pass'd an open portal through;
And when against pursuit he flung
The gate, judge if the echoes rung!
Onward his daring course he bore,
While, mix'd with dying growl and roar,
Wild jubilee and loud hurra
Pursued him on his venturous way.

XXIV.

"Hurra, hurra! Our watch is done!
We hail once more the tropic sun.
Pallid beams of northern day,
Farewell, farewell! Hurra, hurra!

"Five hundred years o'er this cold glen
Hath the pale sun come round agen;
Foot of man, till now, hath ne'er
Dared to cross the Hall of Fear.

"Warrior! thou whose dauntless heart
Gives us from our ward to part,
Be as strong in future trial,
Where resistance is denial.

"Now for Afric's glowing sky,
Zwenga wide and Atlas high,
Zaharak and Dahomay!——
Mount the winds! Hurra, hurra!"

XXV.

The wizard song at distance died,
As if in ether borne astray, [wide
While through waste halls and chambers
The Knight pursued his steady way,
Till to a lofty dome he came,
That flash'd with such a brilliant flame,
As if the wealth of all the world
Were there in rich confusion hurl'd.
For here the gold, in sandy heaps,
With duller earth, incorporate, sleeps;
Was there in ingots piled, and there
Coin'd badge of empery it bare;
Yonder, huge bars of silver lay, [ray,
Dimm'd by the diamond's neighbouring
Like the pale moon in morning day;
And in the midst four Maidens stand,
The daughters of some distant land.
Their hue was of the dark-red dye,
That fringes oft a thunder sky;
Their hands palmetto baskets bare,
And cotton fillets bound their hair;
Slim was their form, their mien was shy,
To earth they bent the humbled eye,
Folded their arms, and suppliant kneel'd,
And thus their proffer'd gifts reveal'd.

XXVI.

CHORUS.

"See the treasures Merlin piled,
Portion meet for Arthur's child.
Bathe in Wealth's unbounded stream,
Wealth that Avarice ne'er could dream!"

FIRST MAIDEN.

"See these clots of virgin gold!
Sever'd from the sparry mould,
Nature's mystic alchemy
In the mine thus bade them lie;
And their orient smile can win
Kings to stoop, and saints to sin."—

SECOND MAIDEN.

"See these pearls, that long have slept;
These were tears by Naiads wept
For the loss of Marinel.
Tritons in the silver shell
Treasured them, till hard and white
As the teeth of Amphitrite."—

THIRD MAIDEN.

"Does a livelier hue delight?
Here are rubies blazing bright,
Here the emerald's fairy green,
And the topaz glows between;
Here their varied hues unite,
In the changeful chrysolite."—

FOURTH MAIDEN.

"Leave these gems of poorer shine,
Leave them all, and look on mine!
While their glories I expand,
Shade thine eyebrows with thy hand.
Mid-day sun and diamond's blaze
Blind the rash beholder's gaze."—

CHORUS.

"Warrior, seize the splendid store;
Would 'twere all our mountains bore!
We should ne'er in future story,
Read, Peru, thy perish'd glory!"

XXVII.

Calmly and unconcern'd, the Knight
Waved aside the treasures bright:—
"Gentle Maidens, rise, I pray!
Bar not thus my destined way.
Let these boasted brilliant toys
Braid the hair of girls and boys!
Bid your streams of gold expand
O'er proud London's thirsty land.
De Vaux of wealth saw never need,
Save to purvey him arms and steed,
And all the ore he deign'd to hoard
Inlays his helm, and hilts his sword."
Thus gently parting from their hold,
He left, unmoved, the dome of gold.

XXVIII.

And now the morning sun was high,
De Vaux was weary, faint, and dry;
When, lo! a plashing sound he hears,
A gladsome signal that he nears
Some frolic water-run;
And soon he reach'd a court-yard square,
Where, dancing in the sultry air,
Toss'd high aloft, a fountain fair
Was sparkling in the sun.
On right and left, a fair arcade,
In long perspective view display'd
Alleys and bowers, for sun or shade:
But, full in front, a door,
Low-brow'd and dark, seem'd as it led
To the lone dwelling of the dead,
Whose memory was no more.

XXIX.

Here stopp'd De Vaux an instant's space,
To bathe his parchèd lips and face,
And mark'd with well-pleased eye,
Refracted on the fountain stream,
In rainbow hues the dazzling beam
Of that gay summer sky.
His senses felt a mild control,
Like that which lulls the weary soul,
From contemplation high
Relaxing, when the ear receives
The music that the greenwood leaves
Make to the breezes' sigh.

XXX.

And oft in such a dreamy mood,
The half-shut eye can frame
Fair apparitions in the wood,
As if the nymphs of field and flood
In gay procession came.
Are these of such fantastic mould,
Seen distant down the fair arcade,
These Maids enlink'd in sister-fold,

Who, late at bashful distance staid,
Now tripping from the greenwood shade,
Nearer the musing champion draw,
And, in a pause of seeming awe,
Again stand doubtful now?—
Ah, that sly pause of witching powers!
That seems to say, "To please be ours,
Be yours to tell us how."
Their hue was of the golden glow
That suns of Candahar bestow,
O'er which in slight suffusion flows
A frequent tinge of paly rose;
Their limbs were fashion'd fair and free,
In nature's justest symmetry; [graced,
And, wreath'd with flowers, with odours
Their raven ringlets reach'd the waist:
In eastern pomp, its gilding pale
The hennah lent each shapely nail,
And the dark sumah gave the eye
More liquid and more lustrous dye.
The spotless veil of misty lawn,
In studied disarrangement, drawn
The form and bosom o'er,
To win the eye, or tempt the touch,
For modesty show'd all too much—
Too much—yet promised more.

XXXI.

"Gentle Knight, a while delay,"
Thus they sung, "thy toilsome way,
While we pay the duty due
To our Master and to you.
Over Avarice, over Fear,
Love triumphant led thee here;
Warrior, list to us, for we
Are slaves to Love, are friends to thee.
Though no treasured gems have we
To proffer on the bended knee,
Though we boast nor arm nor heart
For the assagay or dart,
Swains allow each simple girl
Ruby lip and teeth of pearl;
Or, if dangers more you prize,
Flatterers find them in our eyes.

"Stay, then, gentle Warrior, stay,
Rest till evening steal on day;
Stay, O, stay!—in yonder bowers
We will braid thy locks with flowers,
Spread the feast and fill the wine,
Charm thy ear with sounds divine,
Weave our dances till delight
Yield to languor, day to night.

"Then shall she you most approve
Sing the lays that best you love,
Soft thy mossy couch shall spread,
Watch thy pillow, prop thy head,
Till the weary night be o'er—
Gentle Warrior, wouldst thou more?
Wouldst thou more, fair Warrior,—she
Is slave to Love and slave to thee."

XXXII.

O, do not hold it for a crime
In the bold hero of my rhyme,
For Stoic look,
And meet rebuke,
He lack'd the heart or time;
As round the band of syrens trip,
He kiss'd one damsel's laughing lip,
And press'd another's proffered hand.
Spoke to them all in accents bland,
But broke their magic circle through;
"Kind Maids," he said, "adieu, adieu!
My fate, my fortune, forward lies."
He said, and vanish'd from their eyes;
But, as he dared that darksome way,
Still heard behind their lovely lay:—
"Fair Flower of Courtesy, depart!
Go, where the feelings of the heart
With the warm pulse in concord move;
Go, where Virtue sanctions Love!"

XXXIII.

Downward De Vaux through darksome ways
And ruin'd vaults has gone,
Till issue from their wilder'd maze,
Or safe retreat, seem'd none,—
And e'en the dismal path he strays
Grew worse as he went on.
For cheerful sun, for living air,
Foul vapours rise and mine-fires glare,
Whose fearful light the dangers show'd
That dogg'd him on that dreadful road.
Deep pits, and lakes of waters dun,
They show'd, but show'd not how to shun.
These scenes of desolate despair,
These smothering clouds of poison'd air,
How gladly had De Vaux exchanged,
Though 'twere to face yon tigers ranged!
Nay, soothful bards have said,
So perilous his state seem'd now,
He wish'd him under arbour bough
With Asia's willing maid.
When, joyful sound! at distance near
A trumpet flourish'd loud and clear,
And as it ceased, a lofty lay
Seem'd thus to chide his lagging way.

XXXIV.

"Son of Honour, theme of story,
Think on the reward before ye!
Danger, darkness, toil despise;
'Tis Ambition bids thee rise.

"He that would her heights ascend,
Many a weary step must wend;
Hand and foot and knee he tries;
Thus Ambition's minions rise.

"Lag not now, though rough the way
Fortune's mood brooks no delay;
Grasp the boon that's spread before ye,
Monarch's power, and Conqueror's glory!"

It ceased. Advancing on the sound,
A steep ascent the Wanderer found,
And then a turret stair:
Nor climb'd he far its steepy round
Till fresher blew the air,
And next a welcome glimpse was given,
That cheer'd him with the light of heaven.
At length his toil had won
A lofty hall with trophies dress'd,
Where, as to greet imperial guest,
Four Maidens stood, whose crimson vest
Was bound with golden zone.

XXXV.

Of Europe seem'd the damsels all;
The first a nymph of lively Gaul,
Whose easy step and laughing eye
Her borrow'd air of awe belie;
The next a maid of Spain,
Dark-eyed, dark-hair'd, sedate, yet bold;
White ivory skin and tress of gold,
Her shy and bashful comrade told
For daughter of Almaine.
These maidens bore a royal robe,
With crown, with sceptre, and with globe,
Emblems of empery;
The fourth a space behind them stood,
And leant upon a harp, in mood
Of minstrel ecstasy.
Of merry England she, in dress
Like ancient British Druidess.
Her hair an azure fillet bound,
Her graceful vesture swept the ground,
And, in her hand display'd,
A crown did that fourth Maiden hold,
But unadorn'd with gems and gold,
Of glossy laurel made.

XXXVI.

At once to brave De Vaux knelt down
These foremost Maidens three,
And proffer'd sceptre, robe, and crown,
Liegedom and seignorie,
O'er many a region wide and fair,
Destined, they said, for Arthur's heir;
But homage would he none:—
"Rather," he said, "De Vaux would ride,
A Warden of the Border-side,
In plate and mail, than, robed in pride,
A monarch's empire own;
Rather, far rather, would he be
A free-born knight of England free,
Than sit on Despot's throne."
So pass'd he on, when that fourth Maid,
As starting from a trance,
Upon the harp her finger laid;
Her magic touch the chords obey'd,
Their soul awaked at once;

SONG OF THE FOURTH MAIDEN.

"Quake to your foundations deep,
Stately Towers, and Banner'd Keep,
Bid your vaulted echoes moan,
As the dreaded step they own.

"Fiends, that wait on Merlin's spell,
Hear the foot-fall! mark it well!
Spread your dusty wings abroad,
Boune ye for your homeward road!

"It is His, the first who e'er
Dared the dismal Hall of Fear;
His, who hath the snares defied
Spread by Pleasure, Wealth, and Pride.

"Quake to your foundations deep,
Bastion huge, and Turret steep!
Tremble, Keep! and totter, Tower!
This is Gyneth's waking hour."

XXXVII.

Thus while she sung, the venturous Knight
Has reach'd a bower, where milder light
Through crimson curtains fell;
Such soften'd shade the hill receives,
Her purple veil when twilight leaves
Upon its western swell.
That bower, the gazer to bewitch,
Hath wondrous store of rare and rich
As e'er was seen with eye;
For there by magic skill, I wis,
Form of each thing that living is
Was limn'd in proper dye.
All seem'd to sleep—the timid hare
On form, the stag upon his lair,
The eagle in her eyrie fair
Between the earth and sky.
But what of pictured rich and rare
Could win De Vaux's eye-glance, where,
Deep slumbering in the fatal chair,
He saw King Arthur's child!
Doubt, and anger, and dismay,
From her brow had pass'd away.
Forgot was that fell tourney-day,
For, as she slept, she smiled:
It seem'd that the repentant Seer
Her sleep of many a hundred year
With gentle dreams beguiled.

XXXVIII.

That form of maiden loveliness,
'Twixt childhood and 'twixt youth,
That ivory chair, that sylvan dress,
The arms and ankles bare, express
Of Lyulph's tale the truth.
Still upon her garment's hem
Vanoc's blood made purple gem,
And the warder of command
Cumber'd still her sleeping hand;
Still her dark locks dishevell'd flow
From net of pearl o'er breast of snow;
And so fair the slumberer seems,
That De Vaux impeach'd his dreams,
Vapid all and void of might,
Hiding half her charms from sight.

Motionless a while he stands,
Folds his arms and clasps his hands,
Trembling in his fitful joy,
Doubtful how he should destroy
Long-enduring spell;
Doubtful, too, when slowly rise
Dark-fringed lids of Gyneth's eyes,
What these eyes shall tell.—
"St. George! St. Mary! can it be,
That they will kindly look on me?"

XXXIX.

Gently, lo! the Warrior kneels,
Soft that lovely hand he steals,
Soft to kiss, and soft to clasp—
But the warder leaves her grasp;
Lightning flashes, rolls the thunder,
Gyneth startles from her sleep,
Totters Tower, and trembles Keep,
Burst the Castle-walls asunder!
Fierce and frequent were the shocks,—
Melt the magic halls away;
———But beneath their mystic rocks,
In the arms of bold De Vaux,
Safe the princess lay;
Safe and free from magic power,
Blushing like the rose's flower
Opening to the day; [bound
And round the Champion's brows were
The crown that Druidess had wound,
Of the green laurel-bay.
And this was what remain'd of all
The wealth of each enchanted hall,
The Garland and the Dame:
But where should Warrior seek the meed,
Due to high worth for daring deed,
Except from LOVE and FAME!

CONCLUSION.

I.

MY LUCY, when the Maid is won,
The Minstrel's task, thou know'st, is done;
And to require of bard
That to his dregs the tale should run,
Were ordinance too hard.
Our lovers, briefly be it said,
Wedded as lovers wont to wed,
When tale or play is o'er;
Lived long and blest, loved fond and true,
And saw a numerous race renew
The honours that they bore.
Know, too, that when a pilgrim strays,
In morning mist or evening maze,
Along the mountain lone,
That fairy fortress often mocks
His gaze upon the castled rocks
Of the Valley of Saint John;
But never man since brave De Vaux
The charmèd portal won.
'Tis now a vain illusive show,
That melts whene'er the sunbeams glow,
Or the fresh breeze hath blown.

II.

But see, my love, where far below
Our lingering wheels are moving slow,
The whiles, up-gazing still,
Our menials eye our steepy way,
Marvelling, perchance, what whim can stay
Our steps, when eve is sinking grey
On this gigantic hill.
So think the vulgar—Life and time
Ring all their joys in one dull chime
Of luxury and ease;
And, O! beside these simple knaves,
How many better born are slaves
To such coarse joys as these,—
Dead to the nobler sense that glows
When Nature's grander scenes unclose!
But, Lucy, we will love them yet,
The mountain's misty coronet,
The greenwood, and the wold;
And love the more, that of their maze
Adventure high of other days
By ancient bards is told,
Bringing, perchance, like my poor tale,
Some moral truth in fiction's veil:
Nor love them less, that o'er the hill
The evening breeze, as now, comes chill;—
My love shall wrap her warm,
And, fearless of the slippery way,
While safe she trips the heathy brae,
Shall hang on Arthur's arm.

THE FIELD OF WATERLOO:

A POEM.

TO HER GRACE THE

DUCHESS OF WELLINGTON,

PRINCESS OF WATERLOO, &c., &c., &c.,

THE FOLLOWING VERSES ARE MOST RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED BY

THE AUTHOR.

Advertisement.

It may be some apology for the imperfections of this poem, that it was composed hastily, and during a short tour upon the Continent, when the Author's labours were liable to frequent interruption; but its best apology is, that it was written for the purpose of assisting the Waterloo Subscription.

ABBOTSFORD, 1815.

THE FIELD OF WATERLOO.

Though Valois braved young Edward's gentle hand,
And Albert rush'd on Henry's way-worn band,
With Europe's chosen sons, in arms renown'd,
Yet not on Vere's bold archers long they look'd,
Nor Audley's squires, nor Mowbray's yeomen brook'd,—
They saw their standard fall, and left their monarch bound.—AKENSIDE.

I.

FAIR Brussels, thou art far behind,
Though, lingering on the morning wind,
We yet may hear the hour
Peal'd over orchard and canal,
With voice prolong'd and measured fall,
From proud Saint Michael's tower;
Thy wood, dark Soignies, holds us now,
Where the tall beeches' glossy bough,
For many a league around,
With birch and darksome oak between,
Spreads deep and far a pathless screen,
Of tangled forest ground.

Stems planted close by stems defy
The adventurous foot—the curious eye
For access seeks in vain;
And the brown tapestry of leaves,
Strew'd on the blighted ground, receives
Nor sun, nor air, nor rain.
No opening glade dawns on our way,
No streamlet, glancing to the ray,
Our woodland path has cross'd;
And the straight causeway which we tread
Prolongs a line of dull arcade,
Unvarying through the unvaried shade,
Until in distance lost.

II.

A brighter, livelier scene succeeds;
In groups the scattering wood recedes,
Hedge-rows, and huts, and sunny meads,
And corn-fields, glance between;
The peasant at his labour blithe,
Plies the hook'd staff and shorten'd scythe:*—
But when these ears were green,
Placed close within destruction's scope,
Full little was that rustic's hope
Their ripening to have seen!
And, lo, a hamlet and its fane:—
Let not the gazer with disdain
Their architecture view;
For yonder rude ungraceful shrine,
And disproportion'd spire, are thine,
Immortal WATERLOO!

III.

Fear not the heat, though full and high
The sun has scorch'd the autumn sky,
And scarce a forest straggler now
To shade us spreads a greenwood bough:
These fields have seen a hotter day
Than e'er was fired by sunny ray.
Yet one mile on—yon shatter'd hedge
Crests the soft hill whose long smooth ridge
Looks on the field below,
And sinks so gently on the dale,
That not the folds of Beauty's veil
In easier curves can flow.
Brief space from thence, the ground again
Ascending slowly from the plain,
Forms an opposing screen,
Which, with its crest of upland ground,
Shuts the horizon all around.
The soften'd vale between
Slopes smooth and fair for courser's tread;
Not the most timid maid need dread
To give her snow-white palfrey head
On that wide stubble-ground;
Nor wood, nor tree, nor bush, are there,
Her course to intercept or scare,
Nor fosse nor fence are found,
Save where, from out her shatter'd bowers,
Rise Hougomont's dismantled towers.

IV.

Now, see'st thou aught in this lone scene
Can tell of that which late hath been?—
A stranger might reply,
"The bare extent of stubble-plain
Seems lately lighten'd of its grain;
And yonder sable tracks remain
Marks of the peasant's ponderous wain,
When harvest-home was nigh.
On these broad spots of trampled ground,
Perchance the rustics danced such round
As Teniers loved to draw; [flame,
And where the earth seems scorch'd by
To dress the homely feast they came,
And toil'd the kerchief'd village dame
Around her fire of straw."

V.

So deem'st thou—so each mortal deems,
Of that which is from that which seems.—
But other harvest here,
Than that which peasant's scythe demands,
Was gather'd in by sterner hands,
With bayonet, blade, and spear.
No vulgar crop was theirs to reap,
No stinted harvest thin and cheap!
Heroes before each fatal sweep
Fell thick as ripen'd grain;
And ere the darkening of the day,
Piled high as autumn shocks, there lay
The ghastly harvest of the fray,
The corpses of the slain.

VI.

Ay, look again—that line, so black
And trampled, marks the bivouac,
Yon deep-graved ruts the artillery's track,
So often lost and won;
And close beside, the harden'd mud
Still shows where, fetlock-deep in blood,
The fierce dragoon, through battle's flood,
Dash'd the hot war-horse on.
These spots of excavation tell
The ravage of the bursting shell—
And feel'st thou not the tainted steam,
That reeks against the sultry beam,
From yonder trenchèd mound?
The pestilential fumes declare
That Carnage has replenish'd there
Her garner-house profound.

VII.

Far other harvest-home and feast,
Than claims the boor from scythe released,
On these scorch'd fields were known!
Death hover'd o'er the maddening rout,
And, in the thrilling battle-shout,
Sent for the bloody banquet out
A summons of his own.
Through rolling smoke the Demon's eye
Could well each destined guest espy,
Well could his ear in ecstasy
Distinguish every tone
That fill'd the chorus of the fray—
From cannon-roar and trumpet bray,
From charging squadrons' wild hurra,
From the wild clang that mark'd their way,—
Down to the dying groan,
And the last sob of life's decay,
When breath was all but flown.

VIII.

Feast on, stern foe of mortal life,
Feast on! but think not that a strife,
With such promiscuous carnage rife,

* An asterisk in these pages signifies that a note upon the passage is to be found at the end of the volume.

Protracted space may last;
The deadly tug of war at length
Must limits find in human strength,
And cease when these are past.
Vain hope!—that morn's o'erclouded sun
Heard the wild shout of fight begun
Ere he attain'd his height,
And through the war-smoke, volumed high,
Still peals that unremitted cry,
Though now he stoops to night.
For ten long hours of doubt and dread,
Fresh succours from the extended head
Of either hill the contest fed;
Still down the slope they drew,
The charge of columns pausèd not,
Nor ceased the storm of shell and shot;
For all that war could do
Of skill and force was proved that day,
And turn'd not yet the doubtful fray
On bloody Waterloo.

IX.

Pale Brussels! then what thoughts were thine,*
When ceaseless from the distant line
Continued thunders came!
Each burgher held his breath, to hear
These forerunners of havoc near,
Of rapine and of flame.
What ghastly sights were thine to meet,
When, rolling through thy stately street,
The wounded show'd their mangled plight
In token of the unfinish'd fight,
And from each anguish-laden wain
The blood-drops laid thy dust like rain!
How often in the distant drum
Heard'st thou the fell Invader come,
While Ruin, shouting to his band,
Shook high her torch and gory brand!—
Cheer thee, fair City! From yon stand,
Impatient, still his outstretch'd hand
Points to his prey in vain,
While maddening in his eager mood,
And all unwont to be withstood,
He fires the fight again.

X.

"On! On!" was still his stern exclaim;*
"Confront the battery's jaws of flame!
Rush on the levell'd gun!
My steel-clad cuirassiers, advance!
Each Hulan forward with his lance,
My Guard—my Chosen—charge for France,
France and Napoleon!"
Loud answer'd their acclaiming shout,
Greeting the mandate which sent out
Their bravest and their best to dare
The fate their leader shunn'd to share.*
But He, his country's sword and shield,
Still in the battle front reveal'd,
Where danger fiercest swept the field,
Came like a beam of light,
In action prompt, in sentence brief—
"Soldiers, stand firm," exclaim'd the Chief,
"England shall tell the fight!"*

XI.

On came the whirlwind—like the last
But fiercest sweep of tempest-blast—
On came the whirlwind—steel-gleams broke
Like lightning through the rolling smoke;
The war was waked anew, [loud,
Three hundred cannon-mouths roar'd
And from their throats, with flash and cloud,
Their showers of iron threw.
Beneath their fire, in full career,
Rush'd on the ponderous cuirassier,
The lancer couch'd his ruthless spear,
And hurrying as to havoc near,
The cohorts' eagles flew.
In one dark torrent, broad and strong,
The advancing onset roll'd along,
Forth harbinger'd by fierce acclaim,
That, from the shroud of smoke and flame,
Peal'd wildly the imperial name.

XII.

But on the British heart were lost
The terrors of the charging host;
For not an eye the storm that view'd
Changed its proud glance of fortitude,
Nor was one forward footstep staid,
As dropp'd the dying and the dead.
Fast as their ranks the thunders tear,
Fast they renew'd each serried square;
And on the wounded and the slain
Closed their diminish'd files again,
Till from their line scarce spears' lengths
Emerging from the smoke they see [three,
Helmet, and plume, and panoply,—
Then waked their fire at once!
Each musketeer's revolving knell,
As fast, as regularly fell,
As when they practise to display
Their discipline on festal day.
Then down went helm and lance,
Down were the eagle banners sent,
Down reeling steeds and riders went,
Corslets were pierced, and pennons rent;
And, to augment the fray, [flanks,
Wheel'd full against their staggering
The English horsemen's foaming ranks
Forced their resistless way.
Then to the musket-knell succeeds
The clash of swords—the neigh of steeds—
As plies the smith his clanging trade,*
Against the cuirass rang the blade;
And while amid their close array
The well-served cannon rent their way,
And while amid their scatter'd band
Raged the fierce rider's bloody brand,
Recoil'd in common rout and fear,
Lancer and guard and cuirassier,

Horsemen and foot—a mingled host,
Their leaders fall'n, their standards lost.

XIII.

Then, WELLINGTON! thy piercing eye
This crisis caught of destiny—
The British host had stood [lance
That morn 'gainst charge of sword and
As their own ocean-rocks hold stance,
But when thy voice had said, "Advance!"
They were their ocean's flood.—
O Thou, whose inauspicious aim
Hath wrought thy host this hour of shame,
Think'st thou thy broken bands will bide
The terrors of yon rushing tide?
Or will thy chosen brook to feel
The British shock of levell'd steel,*
Or dost thou turn thine eye
Where coming squadrons gleam afar,
And fresher thunders wake the war,
And other standards fly?—
Think not that in yon columns, file
Thy conquering troops from distant Dyle—
Is Blucher yet unknown?
Or dwells not in thy memory still
(Heard frequent in thine hour of ill)
What notes of hate and vengeance thrill
In Prussia's trumpet tone?—
What yet remains?—shall it be thine
To head the relics of thy line
In one dread effort more?—
The Roman lore thy leisure loved,
And thou canst tell what fortune proved
That Chieftain, who, of yore,
Ambition's dizzy paths essay'd,
And with the gladiators' aid
For empire enterprised—
He stood the cast his rashness play'd,
Left not the victims he had made,
Dug his red grave with his own blade,
And on the field he lost was laid,
Abhorr'd—but not despised.

XIV.

But if revolves thy fainter thought
On safety—howsoever bought,—
Then turn thy fearful rein and ride,
Though twice ten thousand men have died
On this eventful day,
To gild the military fame
Which thou, for life, in traffic tame
Wilt barter thus away.
Shall future ages tell this tale
Of inconsistence faint and frail?
And art thou He of Lodi's bridge,
Marengo's field, and Wagram's ridge!
Or is thy soul like mountain-tide,
That, swell'd by winter storm and shower,
Rolls down in turbulence of power,
A torrent fierce and wide;
Reft of these aids, a rill obscure,
Shrinking unnoticed, mean and poor,
Whose channel shows display'd
The wrecks of its impetuous course,
But not one symptom of the force
By which these wrecks were made!

XV.

Spur on thy way!—since now thine ear
Has brook'd thy veterans' wish to hear,
Who, as thy flight they eyed,
Exclaim'd,—while tears of anguish came,
Wrung forth by pride, and rage, and shame,—
"O, that he had but died!"
But yet, to sum this hour of ill,
Look, ere thou leav'st the fatal hill,
Back on yon broken ranks—
Upon whose wild confusion gleams
The moon, as on the troubled streams
When rivers break their banks,
And, to the ruin'd peasant's eye,
Objects half seen roll swiftly by,
Down the dread current hurl'd—
So mingle banner, wain, and gun,
Where the tumultuous fight rolls on
Of warriors, who, when morn begun,
Defied a banded world.

XVI.

List—frequent to the hurrying rout,
The stern pursuers' vengeful shout
Tells, that upon their broken rear
Rages the Prussian's bloody spear.
So fell a shriek was none,
When Beresina's icy flood
Redden'd and thaw'd with flame and blood,
And, pressing on thy desperate way,
Raised oft and long their wild hurra,
The children of the Don.
Thine ear no yell of horror cleft
So ominous, when all bereft
Of aid, the valiant Polack left—
Ay, left by thee—found soldier's grave
In Leipsic's corpse-encumber'd wave.
Fate, in those various perils past,
Reserved thee still some future cast;
On the dread die thou now hast thrown,
Hangs not a single field alone,
Nor one campaign—thy martial fame,
Thy empire, dynasty, and name,
Have felt the final stroke;
And now, o'er thy devoted head
The last stern vial's wrath is shed,
The last dread seal is broke.

XVII.

Since live thou wilt—refuse not now
Before these demagogues to bow,
Late objects of thy scorn and hate,
Who shall thy once imperial fate
Make wordy theme of vain debate.—
Or shall we say, thou stoop'st less low
In seeking refuge from the foe,
Against whose heart, in prosperous life,
Thine hand hath ever held the knife?

Such homage hath been paid
By Roman and by Grecian voice,
And there were honour in the choice,
If it were freely made.
Then safely come,—in one so low—
So lost,—we cannot own a foe;
Though dear experience bid us end,
In thee we ne'er can hail a friend.—
Come, howsoe'er—but do not hide
Close in thy heart that germ of pride,
Erewhile, by gifted bard espied,
That "yet imperial hope;"
Think not that for a fresh rebound,
To raise ambition from the ground,
We yield thee means or scope.
In safety come—but ne'er again
Hold type of independent reign;
No islet calls thee lord,
We leave thee no confederate band,
No symbol of thy lost command,
To be a dagger in the hand
From which we wrench'd the sword.

XVIII.

Yet, even in yon sequester'd spot,
May worthier conquest be thy lot
Than yet thy life has known;
Conquest, unbought by blood or harm,
That needs nor foreign aid nor arm,
A triumph all thine own.
Such waits thee when thou shalt control
Those passions wild, that stubborn soul,
That marr'd thy prosperous scene:
Hear this—from no unmoved heart,
Which sighs, comparing what THOU ART
With what thou MIGHT'ST HAVE BEEN!

XIX.

Thou, too, whose deeds of fame renew'd
Bankrupt a nation's gratitude,
To thine own noble heart must owe
More than the meed she can bestow.
For not a people's just acclaim,
Not the full hail of Europe's fame,
Thy Prince's smiles, thy State's decree,
The ducal rank, the garter'd knee,
Not these such pure delight afford
As that, when hanging up thy sword,
Well may'st thou think, "This honest steel
Was ever drawn for public weal;
And, such was rightful Heaven's decree,
Ne'er sheathed unless with victory!"

XX.

Look forth, once more, with soften'd heart,
Ere from the field of fame we part;
Triumph and Sorrow border near,
And joy oft melts into a tear.
Alas! what links of love that morn
Has War's rude hand asunder torn!
For ne'er was field so sternly fought,
And ne'er was conquest dearer bought.
Here piled in common slaughter sleep
Those whom affection long shall weep:
Here rests the sire, that ne'er shall strain
His orphans to his heart again;
The son, whom, on his native shore,
The parent's voice shall bless no more;
The bridegroom, who has hardly press'd
His blushing consort to his breast;
The husband, whom through many a year,
Long love and mutual faith endear.
Thou canst not name one tender tie,
But here dissolved its relics lie!
O! when thou see'st some mourner's veil
Shroud her thin form and visage pale,
Or mark'st the Matron's bursting tears
Stream when the stricken drum she hears;
Or see'st how manlier grief, suppress'd,
Is labouring in a father's breast,—
With no inquiry vain pursue
The cause, but think on Waterloo!

XXI.

Period of honour as of woes,
What bright careers 'twas thine to close!*
Mark'd on thy roll of blood what names
To Briton's memory, and to Fame's,
Laid there their last immortal claims!
Thou saw'st in seas of gore expire
Redoubted PICTON'S soul of fire—
Saw'st in the mingled carnage lie
All that of PONSONBY could die—
DE LANCEY change Love's bridal wreath,
For laurels from the hand of Death *—
Saw'st gallant MILLER'S failing eye *
Still bent where Albion's banners fly,
And CAMERON,* in the shock of steel,
Die like the offspring of Lochiel;
And generous GORDON,* mid the strife,
Fall, while he watch'd his leader's life.—
Ah! though her guardian angel's shield
Fenced Briton's hero through the field,
Fate not the less her power made known,
Through his friends' hearts to pierce his own!

XXII.

Forgive, brave Dead, the imperfect lay!
Who may your names, your numbers, say!
What high-strung harp, what lofty line,
To each the dear-earn'd praise assign,
From high-born chiefs of martial fame
To the poor soldier's lowlier name?
Lightly ye rose that dawning-day,
From your cold couch of swamp and clay,
To fill, before the sun was low,
The bed that morning cannot know.—
Oft may the tear the green sod steep,
And sacred be the heroes' sleep,
Till time shall cease to run;
And ne'er beside their noble grave,
May Briton pass and fail to crave
A blessing on the fallen brave
Who fought with Wellington!

XXIII.

Farewell, sad Field! whose blighted face
Wears desolation's withering trace;
Long shall my memory retain
Thy shatter'd huts and trampled grain,
With every mark of martial wrong,
That scathe thy towers, fair Hougomont!*
Yet though thy garden's green arcade
The marksman's fatal post was made,
Though on thy shatter'd beeches fell
The blended rage of shot and shell,
Though from thy blacken'd portals torn,
Their fall thy blighted fruit-trees mourn,
Has not such havoc bought a name
Immortal in the rolls of fame?
Yes—Agincourt may be forgot,
And Cressy be an unknown spot,
And Blenheim's name be new;
But still in story and in song,
For many an age remember'd long,
Shall live the towers of Hougomont,
And field of Waterloo.

CONCLUSION.

STERN tide of human Time! that know'st not rest,
But sweeping from the cradle to the tomb,
Bear'st ever downward on thy dusky breast,
Successive generations to their doom;
While thy capacious stream has equal room
For the gay bark where Pleasure's streamers sport,
And for the prison-ship of guilt and gloom,
The fisher-skiff, and barge that bears a court,
Still wafting onward all to one dark silent port;—

Stern tide of Time! through what mysterious change
Of hope and fear have our frail barks been driven!
For ne'er, before, vicissitude so strange
Was to one race of Adam's offspring given.
And sure such varied change of sea and heaven,
Such unexpected bursts of joy and woe,
Such fearful strife as that where we have striven,
Succeeding ages ne'er again shall know,
Until the awful term when Thou shalt cease to flow!

Well hast thou stood, my Country!—the brave fight
Hast well maintain'd through good report and ill;
In thy just cause and in thy native might,
And in Heaven's grace and justice constant still;
Whether the banded prowess, strength, and skill
Of half the world against thee stood array'd,
Or when, with better views and freer will,
Beside thee Europe's noblest drew the blade,
Each emulous in arms the Ocean Queen to aid.

Well art thou now repaid—though slowly rose,
And struggled long with mists thy blaze of fame,
While like the dawn that in the orient glows
On the broad wave its earlier lustre came;
Then eastern Egypt saw the growing flame,
And Maida's myrtles gleam'd beneath its ray,
Where first the soldier, stung with generous shame,
Rivall'd the heroes of the wat'ry way,
And wash'd in foeman's gore unjust reproach away.

Now, Island Empress, wave thy crest on high,
And bid the banner of thy Patron flow,
Gallant Saint George, the flower of Chivalry,
For thou hast faced, like him, a dragon foe,
And rescued innocence from overthrow,
And trampled down, like him, tyrannic might,
And to the gazing world mayst proudly show
The chosen emblem of thy sainted Knight,
Who quell'd devouring pride, and vindicated right.

Yet 'mid the confidence of just renown,
Renown dear bought, but dearest thus acquired,
Write, Britain, write the moral lesson down:
'Tis not alone the heart with valour fired,
The discipline so dreaded and admired,
In many a field of bloody conquest known;
'Tis constancy in the good cause alone,
Best justifies the meed thy vailant sons have won.

HAROLD THE DAUNTLESS.

A POEM IN SIX CANTOS.

INTRODUCTION.

THERE is a mood of mind, we all have known
On drowsy eve, or dark and low'ring day,
When the tired spirits lose their sprightly tone,
And nought can chase the lingering hours away.
Dull on our soul falls Fancy's dazzling ray,
And Wisdom holds his steadier torch in vain;
Obscured the painting seems, mistuned the lay,
Nor dare we of our listless load complain,
For who for sympathy may seek that cannot tell of pain?

The jolly sportsman knows such drearihood,
When bursts in deluge the autumnal rain,
Clouding that morn which threats the heath-cock's brood; [anglers plain,
Of such, in summer's drought, the
Who hope the soft mild southern shower in vain;
But, more than all, the discontented fair,
Whom father stern, and sterner aunt, restrain
From county-ball, or race occurring rare,
While all her friends around their vestments gay prepare.

Ennui!—or, as our mothers call'd thee, Spleen!
To thee we owe full many a rare device;—
Thine is the sheaf of painted cards, I ween,
The rolling billiard-ball, the rattling dice;
The turning-lathe for framing gimcrack nice;
The amateur's blotch'd pallet thou mayst claim,
Retort, and air-pump, threatening frogs and mice
(Murders disguised by philosophic name),
And much of trifling grave, and much of buxom game.

Then of the books, to catch thy drowsy glance,
Compiled, what bard the catalogue may quote!
Plays, poems, novels, never read but once;—
But not of such the tale fair Edgeworth wrote,
That bears thy name, and is thine antidote;
And not of such the strain my Thomson sung,
Delicious dreams inspiring by his note,
What time to Indolence his harp he strung;—
Oh! might my lay be rank'd that happier list among!

Each hath his refuge whom thy cares assail.
For me, I love my study-fire to trim,
And con right vacantly some idle tale,
Displaying on the couch each listless limb,
Till on the drowsy page the lights grow dim,
And doubtful slumber half supplies the theme;
While antique shapes of knight and giant grim,
Damsel and dwarf, in long procession gleam,
And the Romancer's tale becomes the Reader's dream.

'Tis thus my malady I well may bear,
Albeit outstretch'd, like Pope's own Paridel,
Upon the rack of a too-easy chair;
And find, to cheat the time, a powerful spell
In old romaunts of errantry that tell,
Or later legends of the Fairy-folk,
Or Oriental tale of Afrite fell,
Of Genii, Talisman, and broad-wing'd Roc,
Though taste may blush and frown, and sober reason mock.

Oft at such season, too, will rhymes unsought
Arrange themselves in some romantic lay;—

The which, as things unfitting graver thought,
Are burnt or blotted on some wiser day.—
These few survive—and proudly let me say,
Court not the critic's smile, nor dread his frown;
They well may serve to wile an hour away,
Nor does the volume ask for more renown,
Than Ennui's yawning smile, what time she drops it down.

CANTO FIRST.

I.

LIST to the valorous deeds that were done
By Harold the Dauntless, Count Witikind's son!

Count Witikind came of a regal strain,
And roved with his Norsemen the land and the main.
Woe to the realms which he coasted! for there
Was shedding of blood, and rending of hair,
Rape of maiden, and slaughter of priest,
Gathering of ravens and wolves to the feast:
When he hoisted his standard black,
Before him was battle, behind him wrack,
And he burn'd the churches, that heathen Dane,
To light his band to their barks again.

II.

On Erin's shores was his outrage known,
The winds of France had his banners blown;
Little was there to plunder, yet still
His pirates had foray'd on Scottish hill:
But upon merry England's coast most,
More frequent he sail'd, for he won the
So wide and so far his ravage they knew,
If a sail but gleam'd white 'gainst the welkin blue,
Trumpet and bugle to arms did call,
Burghers hasten'd to man the wall,
Peasants fled inland his fury to 'scape,
Beacons were lighted on headland and cape,
Bells were toll'd out, and aye as they rung,
Fearful and faintly the grey brothers sung,
"Bless us, Saint Mary, from flood and from fire,
From famine and pest, and Count Witikind's ire!"

III.

He liked the wealth of fair England so well,
That he sought in her bosom as native to dwell.
He enter'd the Humber in fearful hour,
And disembark'd with his Danish power.
Three Earls came against him with all their train,—
Two hath he taken, and one hath he slain.
Count Witikind left the Humber's rich strand,
And he wasted and warr'd in Northumberland.
But the Saxon King was a sire in age,
Weak in battle, in council sage;
Peace of that heathen leader he sought,
Gifts he gave, and quiet he bought;
And the Count took upon him the peaceable style
Of a vassal and liegeman of Britain's broad isle.

IV.

Time will rust the sharpest sword,
Time will consume the strongest cord;
That which moulders hemp and steel,
Mortal arm and nerve must feel.
Of the Danish band, whom Count Witikind led,
Many wax'd agèd, and many were dead:
Himself found his armour full weighty to bear,
Wrinkled his brows grew, and hoary his hair;
He lean'd on a staff, when his step went abroad,
And patient his palfrey, when steed he bestrode.
As he grew feebler, his wildness ceased,
He made himself peace with prelate and priest;
Made his peace, and, stooping his head,
Patiently listed the counsel they said:
Saint Cuthbert's Bishop was holy and grave,
Wise and good was the counsel he gave.

V.

"Thou hast murder'd, robb'd, and spoil'd,
Time it is thy poor soul were assoiled;
Priests didst thou slay, and churches burn,
Time it is now to repentance to turn;
Fiends hast thou worshipp'd, with fiendish rite,
Leave now the darkness, and wend into light:
O! while life and space are given,
Turn thee yet, and think of Heaven!"
That stern old heathen his head he raised,
And on the good prelate he steadfastly gazed;
"Give me broad lands on the Wear and the Tyne,
My faith I will leave, and I'll cleave unto thine."

VI.

Broad lands he gave him on Tyne and Wear,
To be held of the Church by bridle and spear;
Part of Monkwearmouth, of Tyndale part,
To better his will, and to soften his heart:
Count Witikind was a joyful man,
Less for the faith than the lands that he wan.

The high church of Durham is dress'd for the day,
The clergy are ranked in their solemn array: [warm,
There came the Count, in a bear-skin
Leaning on Hilda his concubine's arm.
He kneel'd before Saint Cuthbert's shrine,
With patience unwonted at rites divine;
He abjured the gods of heathen race,
And he bent his head at the font of grace.
But such was the grisly old proselyte's look, [pale and shook;
That the priest who baptized him grew
And the old monks mutter'd beneath their hood,
"Of a stem so stubborn can never spring good!"

VII.

Up then arose that grim convertite, [rite;
Homeward he hied him when ended the
The Prelate in honour will with him ride,
And feast in his castle on Tyne's fair side.
Banners and banderols danced in the wind,
Monks rode before them, and spearmen behind;
Onward they pass'd, till fairly did shine
Pennon and cross on the bosom of Tyne;
And full in front did that fortress lower,
In darksome strength with its buttress and tower:
At the castle gate was young Harold there,
Count Witikind's only offspring and heir.

VIII.

Young Harold was fear'd for his hardihood, [mood.
His strength of frame, and his fury of
Rude he was and wild to behold,
Wore neither collar nor bracelet of gold,
Cap of vair nor rich array,
Such as should grace that festal day:
His doublet of bull's hide was all unbraced, [laced:
Uncover'd his head, and his sandal unHis shaggy black locks on his brow hung low, [swarthy glow;
And his eyes glanced through them a
A Danish club in his hand he bore,
The spikes were clotted with recent gore;
At his back a she-wolf, and her wolf-cubs twain,
In the dangerous chase that morning slain.
Rude was the greeting his father he made,
None to the Bishop,—while thus he said:—

IX.

"What priest-led hypocrite art thou,
With thy humbled look and thy monkish brow, [vow?
Like a shaveling who studies to cheat his
Canst thou be Witikind the Waster known,
Royal Eric's fearless son,
Haughty Gunhilda's haughtier lord,
Who won his bride by the axe and sword;
From the shrine of St. Peter the chalice who tore, [Thor;
And melted to bracelets for Freya and
With one blow of his gauntlet who burst the skull,
Before Odin's stone, of the Mountain Bull?
Then ye worshipp'd with rites that to war-gods belong, [of the strong;
With the deed of the brave, and the blow
And now, in thine age to dotage sunk,
Wilt thou patter thy crimes to a shaven monk,— [hair,—
Lay down thy mail-shirt for clothing of
Fasting and scourge, like a slave, wilt thou bear?
Or, at best, be admitted in slothful bower
To batten with priest and with paramour?
Oh! out upon thine endless shame!
Each Scald's high harp shall blast thy fame, [name!"
And thy son will refuse thee a father's

X.

Ireful wax'd old Witikind's look,
His faltering voice with fury shook:—
"Hear me, Harold of harden'd heart!
Stubborn and wilful ever thou wert,
Thine outrage insane I command thee to cease,
Fear my wrath and remain at peace:—
Just is the debt of repentance I've paid,
Richly the Church has a recompense made,
And the truth of her doctrines I prove with my blade, [owe,
But reckoning to none of my actions I
And least to my son such accounting will show.
Why speak I to thee of repentance or truth,
Who ne'er from thy childhood knew reason or ruth?
Hence! to the wolf and the bear in her den;
These are thy mates, and not rational men."

XI.

Grimly smiled Harold, and coldly replied,
"We must honour our sires, if we fear when they chide.
For me, I am yet what thy lessons have made, [blade;
I was rock'd in a buckler and fed from a
An infant, was taught to clasp hands and to shout [had broke out;
From the roofs of the tower when the flame
In the blood of slain foemen my finger to dip, [my lip.—
And tinge with its purple my cheek and
'Tis thou know'st not truth, that hast barter'd in eld,
For a price, the brave faith that thine ancestors held.

When this wolf,"—and the carcase he flung on the plain,—
"Shall awake and give food to her nurslings again,
The face of his father will Harold review;
Till then, agèd Heathen, young Christian, adieu!"

XII.

Priest, monk, and prelate stood aghast,
As through the pageant the heathen pass'd.
A cross-bearer out of his saddle he flung,
Laid his hand on the pommel, and into it sprung.
Loud was the shriek, and deep the groan,
When the holy sign on the earth was thrown!
The fierce old Count unsheathed his brand,
But the calmer Prelate stay'd his hand.
"Let him pass free!—Heaven knows its hour,—
But he must own repentance's power,
Pray and weep, and penance bear,
Ere he hold land by the Tyne and the Wear."
Thus in scorn and in wrath from his father is gone
Young Harold the Dauntless, Count Witikind's son.

XIII.

High was the feasting in Witikind's hall,
Revell'd priests, soldiers, and pagans, and all;
And e'en the good Bishop was fain to endure:
The scandal, which time and instruction might cure:
It were dangerous, he deem'd, at the first
In his wine and his wassail, a half-christen'd Dane.
The mead flow'd around, and the ale was drain'd dry,
Wild was the laughter, the song, and the cry;
With Kyrie Eleison came clamorously in
The war-songs of Danesmen, Norweyan, and Finn.
Till man after man the contention gave o'er,
Outstretch'd on the rushes that strew'd the hall floor;
And the tempest within, having ceased its wild rout,
Gave place to the tempest that thunder'd without.

XIV.

Apart from the wassail, in turret alone,
Lay flaxen-hair'd Gunnar, old Ermengarde's son;
In the train of Lord Harold that Page was the first,
For Harold in childhood had Ermengarde nursed;
And grieved was young Gunnar his master should roam,
Unhoused and unfriended, an exile from home.

He heard the deep thunder, the plashing of rain,
He saw the red lightning through shot-hole and pane;
"And oh!" said the Page, "on the shelterless wold
Lord Harold is wandering in darkness and cold!
What though he was stubborn, and wayward, and wild,
He endured me because I was Ermengarde's child,—
And often from dawn till the set of the sun,
In the chase, by his stirrup, unbidden I run;
I would I were older, and knighthood could bear,
I would soon quit the banks of the Tyne and the Wear:
For my mother's command, with her last parting breath,
Bade me follow her nursling in life and to death.

XV.

"It pours and it thunders, it lightens amain,
As if Lok, the Destroyer, had burst from his chain!
Accursed by the Church, and expell'd by his sire,
Nor Christian nor Dane give him shelter or fire,
And this tempest what mortal may houseless endure?
Unaided, unmantled, he dies on the moor,
Whate'er comes of Gunnar, he tarries not here."
He leapt from his couch, and he grasp'd to his spear;
Sought the hall of the feast. Undisturb'd by his tread,
The wassailers slept fast as the sleep of the dead:
"Ungrateful and bestial!" his anger broke forth,
"To forget 'mid your goblets the pride of the North!
And you, ye cowl'd priests, who have plenty in store,
Must give Gunnar for ransom a palfrey and ore."

XVI.

Then, heeding full little of ban or of curse,
He has seized on the Prior of Jorvaux's purse:
Saint Meneholt's Abbot next morning has miss'd
His mantle, deep furr'd from the cape to the wrist;
The Seneschal's keys from his belt he has ta'en
(Well drench'd on that eve was old Hildebrand's brain).
To the stable-yard he made his way,
And mounted the Bishop's palfrey gay,
Castle and hamlet behind him has cast,
And right on his way to the moorland has pass'd.
Sore snorted the palfrey, unused to face
A weather so wild at so rash a pace;
So long he snorted, so loud he neigh'd,
There answer'd a steed that was bound beside,

And the red flash of lightning show'd there where lay [the clay.
His master, Lord Harold, outstretch'd on

XVII.

Up he started, and thunder'd out, "Stand!"
And raised the club in his deadly hand.
The flaxen-hair'd Gunnar his purpose told,
Show'd the palfrey and proffer'd the gold.
"Back, back, and home, thou simple boy!
Thou canst not share my grief or joy:
Have I not mark'd thee wail and cry
When thou hast seen a sparrow die?
And canst thou, as my follower should,
Wade ankle-deep through foeman's blood,
Dare mortal and immortal foe,
The gods above, the fiends below,
And man on earth, more hateful still,
The very fountain-head of ill?
Desperate of life, and careless of death,
Lover of bloodshed, and slaughter, and scathe,
Such must thou be with me to roam,
And such thou canst not be—back, and home!"

XVIII.

Young Gunnar shook like an aspen bough,
As he heard the harsh voice and beheld the dark brow,
And half he repented his purpose and vow.
But now to draw back were bootless shame,
And he loved his master, so urged his claim: [weak,
"Alas! if my arm and my courage be
Bear with me a while for old Ermengarde's sake;
Nor deem so lightly of Gunnar's faith,
As to fear he would break it for peril of death.
Have I not risk'd it to fetch thee this gold,
This surcoat and mantle to fence thee from
And, did I bear a baser mind, [cold?
What lot remains if I stay behind?
The priests' revenge, thy father's wrath,
A dungeon, and a shameful death."

XIX.

With gentler look Lord Harold eyed
The Page, then turn'd his head aside;
And either a tear did his eyelash stain,
Or it caught a drop of the passing rain.
"Art thou an outcast, then?" quoth he;
"The meeter page to follow me."
'Twere bootless to tell what climes they sought,
Ventures achieved, and battles fought;
How oft with few, how oft alone,
Fierce Harold's arm the field hath won.
Men swore his eye, that flash'd so red
When each other glance was quench'd with dread,
Bore oft a light of deadly flame,
That ne'er from mortal courage came.
Those limbs so strong, that mood so stern,
That loved the couch of heath and fern,
Afar from hamlet, tower, and town,
More than to rest on driven down;
That stubborn frame, that sullen mood,
Men deem'd must come of aught but good;
And they whisper'd, the great Master Fiend was at one
With Harold the Dauntless, Count Witikind's son.

XX.

Years after years had gone and fled,
The good old Prelate lies lapp'd in lead;
In the chapel still is shown
His sculptured form on a marble stone,
With staff and ring and scapulaire,
And folded hands in the act of prayer.
Saint Cuthbert's mitre is resting now
On the haughty Saxon, bold Aldingar's brow;
The power of his crozier he loved to extend
O'er whatever would break, or whatever would bend; [in pall,
And now hath he clothed him in cope and
And the Chapter of Durham has met at his call. [Bishop said,
"And hear ye not, brethren," the proud
"That our vassal, the Danish Count Witikind's dead?
All his gold and his goods hath he given
To Holy Church for the love of Heaven,
And hath founded a chantry with stipend and dole,
That priests and that beadsmen may pray for his soul:
Harold his son is wandering abroad,
Dreaded by man and abhorr'd by God;
Meet it is not, that such should heir
The lands of the Church on the Tyne and the Wear,
And at her pleasure, her hallow'd hands
May now resume these wealthy lands."

XXI.

Answer'd good Eustace, a canon old,—
"Harold is tameless, and furious, and bold;
Ever Renown blows a note of fame,
And a note of fear, when she sounds his name;
Much of bloodshed and much of scathe
Have been their lot who have waked his wrath.
Leave him these lands and lordships still;
Heaven in its hour may change his will;
But if reft of gold, and of living bare,
An evil counsellor is despair."
More had he said, but the Prelate frown'd,
And murmur'd his brethren who sate around.

And with one consent have they given their doom,
That the Church should the lands of Saint Cuthbert resume.
So will'd the Prelate; and canon and dean
Gave to his judgment their loud amen.

CANTO SECOND.

I.

'Tis merry in greenwood,—thus runs the old lay,—
In the gladsome month of lively May,
When the wild birds' song on stem and spray
Invites to forest bower;
Then rears the ash his airy crest,
Then shines the birch in silver vest,
And the beech in glistening leaves is drest,
And dark between shows the oak's proud breast,
Like a chieftain's frowning tower;
Though a thousand branches join their screen,
Yet the broken sunbeams glance between,
And tip the leaves with lighter green,
With brighter tints the flower:
Dull is the heart that loves not then
The deep recess of the wildwood glen,
Where roe and red-deer find sheltering den,
When the sun is in his power.

II.

Less merry, perchance, is the fading leaf
That follows so soon on the gather'd sheaf,
When the greenwood loses the name;
Silent is then the forest bound,
Save the redbreast's note, and the rustling sound
Of frost-nipt leaves that are dropping round,
Or the deep-mouth'd cry of the distant hound
That opens on his game:
Yet then, too, I love the forest wide,
Whether the sun in splendour ride,
And gild its many-colour'd side;
Or whether the soft and silvery haze,
In vapoury folds, o'er the landscape strays,
And half involves the woodland maze,
Like an early widow's veil,
Where wimpling tissue from the gaze
The form half hides, and half betrays,
Of beauty wan and pale.

III.

Fair Metelill was a woodland maid,
Her father a rover of greenwood shade,
By forest statutes undismay'd,
Who lived by bow and quiver;
Well known was Wulfstane's archery,
By merry Tyne both on moor and lea,
Through wooded Weardale's glens so free,
Well beside Stanhope's wildwood tree,
And well on Ganlesse river.
Yet free though he trespass'd on woodland game,
More known and more fear'd was the wizard fame
Of Jutta of Rookhope, the Outlaw's dame;
Fear'd when she frown'd was her eye of flame,
More fear'd when in wrath she laugh'd;
For, then, 'twas said, more fatal true
To its dread aim her spell-glance flew,
Than when from Wulfstane's bended yew
Sprung forth the grey-goose shaft.

IV.

Yet had this fierce and dreaded pair,
So Heaven decreed, a daughter fair;
None brighter crown'd the bed,
In Britain's bounds, of peer or prince,
Nor hath, perchance, a lovelier since,
In this fair isle been bred.
And nought of fraud, or ire, or ill,
Was known to gentle Metelill,—
A simple maiden she;
The spells in dimpled smile that lie,
And a downcast blush, and the darts that fly
With the sidelong glance of a hazel eye,
Were her arms and witchery.
So young, so simple was she yet,
She scarce could childhood's joys forget,
And still she loved, in secret set
Beneath the greenwood tree,
To plait the rushy coronet,
And braid with flowers her locks of jet,
As when in infancy;—
Yet could that heart, so simple, prove
The early dawn of stealing love:
Ah! gentle maid, beware!
The power who, now so mild a guest,
Gives dangerous yet delicious zest
To the calm pleasures of thy breast,
Will soon, a tyrant o'er the rest,
Let none his empire share.

V.

One morn, in kirtle green array'd,
Deep in the wood the maiden stray'd,
And, where a fountain sprung,
She sate her down, unseen, to thread
The scarlet berry's mimic braid,
And while the beads she strung,
Like the blithe lark, whose carol gay
Gives a good-morrow to the day,
So lightsomely she sung.

VI.

SONG.

"Lord William was born in gilded bower;
The heir of Wilton's lofty tower;
Yet better loves Lord William now
To roam beneath wild Rookhope's brow;
And William has lived where ladies fair
With gawds and jewels deck their hair,
Yet better loves the dewdrops still
That pearl the locks of Metelill.

"The pious Palmer loves, I wis,
Saint Cuthbert's hallow'd beads to kiss;
But I, though simple girl I be,
Might have such homage paid to me;
For did Lord William see me suit
This necklace of the bramble's fruit,
He fain—but must not have his will—
Would kiss the beads of Metelill.

"My nurse has told me many a tale,
How vows of love are weak and frail;
My mother says that courtly youth
By rustic maid means seldom sooth.
What should they mean? it cannot be,
That such a warning's meant for me,
For nought—oh! nought of fraud or ill
Can William mean to Metelill!"

VII.

Sudden she stops—and starts to feel
A weighty hand, a glove of steel,
Upon her shrinking shoulders laid;
Fearful she turn'd, and saw, dismay'd,
A Knight in plate and mail array'd,
His crest and bearing worn and fray'd,
His surcoat soil'd and riven,
Form'd like that giant race of yore,
Whose long-continued crimes outwore
The sufferance of Heaven.
Stern accents made his pleasure known,
Though then he used his gentlest tone:
"Maiden," he said, "sing forth thy glee.
Start not—sing on—it pleases me."

VIII.

Secured within his powerful hold,
To bend her knee, her hands to fold,
Was all the maiden might;
And "Oh! forgive," she faintly said,
"The terrors of a simple maid,
If thou art mortal wight?
But if—of such strange tales are told—
Unearthly warrior of the wold,
Thou com'st to chide mine accents bold,
My mother, Jutta, knows the spell,
At noon and midnight pleasing well
The disembodied ear.
Oh! let her powerful charms atone
For aught my rashness may have done,
And cease thy grasp of fear."
Then laugh'd the Knight—his laughter's sound
Half in the hollow helmet drown'd;
His barrèd visor then he raised,
And steady on the maiden gazed.
He smooth'd his brows, as best he might,
To the dread calm of autumn night,
When sinks the tempest roar;
Yet still the cautious fishers eye
The clouds, and fear the gloomy sky,
And haul their barks on shore.

IX.

"Damsel," he said, "be wise and learn
Matters of weight and deep concern:
From distant realms I come, [plann'd
And, wanderer long, at length have
In this my native Northern land
To seek myself a home.
Nor that alone—a mate I seek;
She must be gentle, soft, and meek,—
No lordly dame for me;
Myself am something rough of mood,
And feel the fire of royal blood,
And therefore do not hold it good
To match in my degree.
Then, since coy maidens say my face
Is harsh, my form devoid of grace,
For a fair lineage to provide,
'Tis meet that my selected bride
In lineaments be fair;
I love thine well—till now I ne'er
Look'd patient on a face of fear,
But now that tremulous sob and tear
Become thy beauty rare.
One kiss—nay, damsel, coy it not!—
And now go seek thy parents' cot,
And say, a bridegroom soon I come,
To woo my love, and bear her home."

X.

Home sprung the maid without a pause,
As leveret 'scaped from greyhound's jaws;
But still she lock'd, howe'er distress'd,
The secret in her boding breast;
Dreading her sire, who oft forbade
Her steps should stray to distant glade.
Night came—to her accustom'd nook
Her distaff agèd Jutta took,
And by the lamp's imperfect glow, [bow.
Rough Wulfstane trimm'd his shafts and
Sudden and clamorous, from the ground
Upstarted slumbering brach and hound;
Loud knocking next the lodge alarms,
And Wulfstane snatches at his arms,
When open flew the yielding door,
And that grim Warrior press'd the floor.

XI.

"All peace be here—What! none replies!
Dismiss your fears, and your surprise.
'Tis I—that Maid hath told my tale,—
Or, trembler, did thy courage fail?
It recks not—It is I demand
Fair Metelill in marriage band;
Harold the Dauntless I, whose name
Is brave men's boast and caitiff's shame."
The parents sought each other's eyes,
With awe, resentment, and surprise:
Wulfstane, to quarrel prompt, began
The stranger's size and thewes to scan;
But as he scann'd his courage sunk,
And from unequal strife he shrunk,

Then forth, to blight and blemish, flies
The harmful curse from Jutta's eyes;
Yet, fatal howsoe'er, the spell
On Harold innocently fell!
And disappointment and amaze
Were in the witch's wilder gaze.

XII.

But soon the wit of woman woke,
And to the Warrior mild she spoke:
"Her child was all too young."—"A toy,
The refuge of a maiden coy."—
Again, "A powerful baron's heir
Claims in her heart an interest fair."—
"A trifle—whisper in his ear,
That Harold is a suitor here!"—
Baffled at length she sought delay:
"Would not the knight till morning stay?
Late was the hour—he there might rest
Till morn, their lodge's honour'd guest."
Such were her words,—her craft might cast,
Her honour'd guest should sleep his last:
"No, not to-night—but soon," he swore,
"He would return, nor leave them more."
The threshold then his huge stride crost,
And soon he was in darkness lost.

XIII.

Appall'd a while the parents stood,
Then changed their fear to angry mood,
And foremost fell their words of ill
On unresisting Metelill:
Was she not caution'd and forbid,
Forewarn'd, implored, accused, and chid,
And must she still to greenwood roam,
To marshal such misfortune home?
"Hence, minion—to thy chamber hence—
There prudence learn and penitence."
She went—her lonely couch to steep
In tears which absent lovers weep;
Or if she gain'd a troubled sleep,
Fierce Harold's suit was still the theme
And terror of her feverish dream.

XIV.

Scarce was she gone, her dame and sire
Upon each other bent their ire;
"A woodsman thou, and hast a spear,
And couldst thou such an insult bear?"
Sullen he said, "A man contends
With men, a witch with sprites and fiends;
Not to mere mortal wight belong
Yon gloomy brow and frame so strong.
But thou—is this thy promise fair,
That your Lord William, wealthy heir
To Ulrick, Baron of Witton-le-Wear,
Should Metelill to altar bear?
Do all the spells thou boast'st as thine
Serve but to slay some peasant's kine,
His grain in autumn's storms to steep,
Or thorough fog and fen to sweep,
And hag-ride some poor rustic's sleep?
Is such mean mischief worth the fame
Of sorceress and witch's name?
Fame, which with all men's wish conspires,
With thy deserts and my desires,
To damn thy corpse to penal fires?
Out on thee, witch! aroint! aroint! [joint?
What now shall put thy schemes in
What save this trusty arrow's point,
From the dark dingle when it flies,
And he who meets it gasps and dies."

XV.

Stern she replied, "I will not wage
War with thy folly or thy rage;
But ere the morrow's sun be low,
Wulfstane of Rookhope, thou shalt know,
If I can 'venge me on a foe.
Believe the while, that whatsoe'er
I spoke, in ire, of bow and spear,
It is not Harold's destiny
The death of pilfer'd deer to die.
But he, and thou, and yon pale moon
(That shall be yet more pallid soon,
Before she sink behind the dell),
Thou, she, and Harold too, shall tell
What Jutta knows of charm or spell."
Thus muttering, to the door she bent
Her wayward steps, and forth she went,
And left alone the moody sire,
To cherish or to slake his ire.

XVI.

Far faster than belong'd to age
Has Jutta made her pilgrimage.
A priest has met her as she pass'd,
And cross'd himself and stood aghast:
She traced a hamlet—not a cur
His throat would ope, his foot would stir;
By crouch, by trembling, and by groan,
They made her hated presence known!
But when she strode the sable fell,
Were wilder sounds her way to tell,—
For far was heard the fox's yell,
The black-cock waked and faintly crew,
Scream'd o'er the moss the scared curlew;
Where o'er the cataract the oak
Lay slant, was heard the raven's croak;
The mountain-cat, which sought his prey,
Glared, scream'd, and started from her way:
Such music cheer'd her journey lone
To the deep dell and rocking stone;
There, with unhallow'd hymn of praise,
She called a God of heathen days.

XVII.

INVOCATION.

"From thy Pomeranian throne,
Hewn in rock of living stone,
Where, to thy godhead faithful yet,
Bend Esthonian, Finn, and Lett,
And their swords in vengeance whet,
That shall make thine altars wet,

Wet and red for ages more
With the Christians' hated gore,—
Hear me! Sovereign of the Rock,
Hear me! mighty Zernebock!

"Mightiest of the mighty known,
Here thy wonders have been shown;
Hundred tribes in various tongue
Oft have here thy praises sung;
Down that stone with Runic seam'd,
Hundred victims' blood hath stream'd!
Now one woman comes alone,
And but wets it with her own,
The last, the feeblest of thy flock,—
Hear—and be present, Zernebock!

"Hark! he comes! the night-blast cold
Wilder sweeps along the wold;
The cloudless moon grows dark and dim,
And bristling hair and quaking limb
Proclaim the Master Demon nigh,—
Those who view his form shall die!
Lo! I stoop and veil my head;
Thou who rid'st the tempest dread,
Shaking hill and rending oak—
Spare me! spare me! Zernebock.

"He comes not yet! shall cold delay
Thy votaress at her need repay?
Thou—shall I call thee god or fiend?—
Let others on thy mood attend
With prayer and ritual—Jutta's arms
Are necromantic words and charms;
Mine is the spell, that, utter'd once,
Shall wake Thy Master from his trance,
Shake his red mansion-house of pain,
And burst his seven-times-twisted chain!—
So! com'st thou ere the spell is spoke?
I own thy presence, Zernebock."—

XVIII.

"Daughter of dust," the Deep Voice said,
—Shook while it spoke the vale for dread,
Rock'd on the base that massive stone,
The Evil Deity to own,—
"Daughter of dust! not mine the power
Thou seek'st on Harold's fatal hour.
'Twixt heaven and hell there is a strife
Waged for his soul and for his life,
And fain would we the combat win,
And snatch him in his hour of sin.
There is a star now rising red,
That threats him with an influence dread:
Woman, thine arts of malice whet,
To use the space before it set.
Involve him with the Church in strife,
Push on adventurous chance his life;
Ourself will in the hour of need,
As best we may, thy counsels speed."
So ceased the Voice; for seven leagues
Each hamlet started at the sound; [round
But slept again, as slowly died
Its thunders on the hill's brown side.

XIX.

"And is this all," said Jutta stern,
"That thou canst teach and I can learn?
Hence! to the land of fog and waste,
There fittest is thine influence placed,
Thou powerless, sluggish deity!
But ne'er shall Briton bend the knee
Again before so poor a god."
She struck the altar with her rod;
Slight was the touch, as when at need
A damsel stirs her tardy steed;
But to the blow the stone gave place,
And, starting from its balanced base,
Roll'd thundering down the moonlight dell,—
Re-echo'd moorland, rock, and fell;
Into the moonlight tarn it dash'd,
Their shores the sounding surges lash'd,
And there was ripple, rage, and foam;
But on that lake, so dark and lone,
Placid and pale the moonbeam shone
As Jutta hied her home.

CANTO THIRD.

I.

GREY towers of Durham! there was once a time [vague hope,
I view'd your battlements with such
As brightens life in its first dawning prime; [scope
Not that e'en then came within fancy's
A vision vain of mitre, throne, or cope;
Yet, gazing on the venerable hall,
Her flattering dreams would in perspective ope [stall,—
Some reverend room, some prebendary's
And thus Hope me deceived as she deceiveth all.

Well yet I love thy mix'd and massive piles, [the Scot,
Half church of God, half castle 'gainst
And long to roam these venerable aisles,
With records stored of deeds long since forgot; [lot,
There might I share my Surtees' happier
Who leaves at will his patrimonial field
To ransack every crypt and hallow'd spot, [yield,
And from oblivion rend the spoils they
Restoring priestly chant and clang of knightly shield.

Vain is the wish—since other cares demand
Each vacant hour, and in another clime;
But still that northern harp invites my hand, [time;
Which tells the wonder of thine earlier

And fain its numbers would I now command [fair,
To paint the beauties of that dawning
When Harold, gazing from its lofty stand,
Upon the western heights of Beaurepaire, [winding Wear.
Saw Saxon Eadmer's towers begirt by

II.

Fair on the half-seen stream the sunbeams danced,
Betraying it beneath the woodland bank,
And fair between the Gothic turrets glanced [and flank.
Broad lights, and shadows fell on front
Where tower and buttress rose in martial rank
And girdled in the massive donjon Keep,
And from their circuit peal'd o'er bush and bank, [deep,
The matin bell with summons long and
And echo answer'd still with long-resounding sweep.

III.

The morning mists rose from the ground,
Each merry bird awaken'd round,
As if in revelry;
Afar the bugles' clanging sound
Call'd to the chase the lagging hound;
The gale breathed soft and free,
And seem'd to linger on its way
To catch fresh odours from the spray,
And waved it in its wanton play
So light and gamesomely.
The scenes which morning beams reveal,
Its sounds to hear, its gales to feel
In all their fragrance round him steal,
It melted Harold's heart of steel,
And, hardly wotting why,
He doff'd his helmet's gloomy pride,
And hung it on a tree beside,
Laid mace and falchion by,
And on the greensward sate him down,
And from his dark habitual frown
Relax'd his rugged brow—
Whoever hath the doubtful task
From that stern Dane a boon to ask,
Were wise to ask it now.

IV.

His place beside young Gunnar took,
And mark'd his master's softening look,
And in his eye's dark mirror spied
The gloom of stormy thoughts subside,
And cautious watch'd the fittest tide
To speak a warning word.
So when the torrent's billows shrink,
The timid pilgrim on the brink
Waits long to see them wave and sink,
Ere he dare brave the ford,
And often, after doubtful pause,
His step advances or withdraws:
Fearful to move the slumbering ire
Of his stern lord, thus stood the squire,
Till Harold raised his eye,
That glanced as when athwart the shroud
Of the dispersing tempest-cloud
The bursting sunbeams fly.

V.

"Arouse thee, son of Ermengarde,
Offspring of prophetess and bard!
Take harp, and greet this lovely prime
With some high strain of Runic rhyme,
Strong, deep, and powerful! Peal it round
Like that loud bell's sonorous sound,
Yet wild by fits, as when the lay
Of bird and bugle hail the day.
Such was my grandsire Eric's sport,
When dawn gleam'd on his martial court,
Heymar the Scald with harp's high sound,
Summon'd the chiefs who slept around;
Couch'd on the spoils of wolf and bear,
They roused like lions from their lair,
Then rush'd in emulation forth
To enhance the glories of the North.—
Proud Eric, mightiest of thy race,
Where is thy shadowy resting-place?
In wild Valhalla hast thou quaff'd
From foeman's skull metheglin draught,
Or wanderest where thy cairn was piled
To frown o'er oceans wide and wild?
Or have the milder Christians given
Thy refuge in their peaceful heaven?
Where'er thou art, to thee are known
Our toils endured, our trophies won,
Our wars, our wanderings, and our woes."
He ceased, and Gunnar's song arose.

VI.

SONG.

"Hawk and osprey scream'd for joy
O'er the beetling cliffs of Hoy,
Crimson foam the beach o'erspread,
The heath was dyed with darker red,
When o'er Eric, Inguar's son,
Dane and Northman piled the stone;
Singing wild the war-song stern,
'Rest thee, Dweller of the Cairn!'

"Where eddying currents foam and boil
By Bersa's burgh and Græmsay's isle,
The seaman sees a martial form
Half-mingled with the mist and storm.
In anxious awe he bears away
To moor his bark in Stromna's bay,
And murmurs from the bounding stern,
'Rest thee, Dweller of the Cairn!'

"What cares disturb the mighty dead?
Each honour'd rite was duly paid;
No daring hand thy helm unlaced,
Thy sword, thy shield, were near thee placed,—

Thy flinty couch no tear profaned,
Without, with hostile blood was stain'd;
Within, 'twas lined with moss and fern,—
Then rest thee, Dweller of the Cairn!

"He may not rest; from realms afar
Comes voice of battle and of war,
Of conquest wrought with bloody hand
On Carmel's cliffs and Jordan's strand,
When Odin's warlike son could daunt
The turban'd race of Termagaunt."——

VII.

"Peace," said the Knight, "the noble
Our warlike fathers' deeds recall'd, [Scald
But never strove to soothe the son
With tales of what himself had done.
At Odin's board the bard sits high
Whose harp ne'er stoop'd to flattery;
But highest he whose daring lay
Hath dared unwelcome truths to say."
With doubtful smile young Gunnar eyed
His master's looks, and nought replied—
But well that smile his master led
To construe what he left unsaid.
"Is it to me, thou timid youth,
Thou fear'st to speak unwelcome truth?
My soul no more thy censure grieves
Than frosts rob laurels of their leaves.
Say on—and yet—beware the rude
And wild distemper of my blood;
Loath were I that mine ire should wrong
The youth that bore my shield so long,
And who, in service constant still,
Though weak in frame, art strong in will."— [depends
"Oh!" quoth the page, "even there
My counsel—there my warning tends—
Oft seems as of my master's breast
Some demon were the sudden guest;
Then at the first misconstrued word
His hand is on the mace and sword,
From her firm seat his wisdom driven,
His life to countless dangers given.—
O! would that Gunnar could suffice
To be the fiend's last sacrifice,
So that, when glutted with my gore,
He fled, and tempted thee no more!"

VIII.

Then waved his hand, and shook his head,
The impatient Dane, while thus he said:
"Profane not, youth—it is not thine
To judge the spirit of our line—
The bold Berserkar's rage divine,
Through whose inspiring, deeds are wrought
Past human strength and human thought.
When full upon his gloomy soul
The champion feels the influence roll,
He swims the lake, he leaps the wall—
Heeds not the depth, nor plumbs the fall—
Unshielded, mail-less, on he goes
Singly against a host of foes;
Their spears he holds like wither'd reeds,
Their mail like maiden's silken weeds;
One 'gainst a hundred will he strive,
Take countless wounds, and yet survive.
Then rush the eagles to his cry
Of slaughter and of victory,—
And blood he quaffs like Odin's bowl,
Deep drinks his sword,—deep drinks his soul;
And all that meet him in his ire
He gives to ruin, rout, and fire;
Then, like gorged lion, seeks some den,
And couches till he's man agen.—
Thou know'st the signs of look and limb,
When 'gins that rage to overbrim—
Thou know'st when I am moved, and why;
And when thou seest me roll mine eye,
Set my teeth thus, and stamp my foot,
Regard thy safety and be mute;
But else speak boldly out whate'er
Is fitting that a knight should hear.
I love thee, youth. Thy lay has power
Upon my dark and sullen hour;—
So Christian monks are wont to say
Demons of old were charm'd away;
Then fear not I will rashly deem
Ill of thy speech, whate'er the theme."

IX.

As down some strait in doubt and dread
The watchful pilot drops the lead,
And, cautious in the midst to steer,
The shoaling channel sounds with fear;
So, lest on dangerous ground he swerved,
The Page his master's brow observed,
Pausing at intervals to fling
His hand o'er the melodious string,
And to his moody breast apply
The soothing charm of harmony,
While hinted half, and half exprest,
This warning song convey'd the rest.—

SONG.

1.

"Ill fares the bark with tackle riven,
And ill when on the breakers driven,—
Ill when the storm-sprite shrieks in air,
And the scared mermaid tears her hair;
But worse when on her helm the hand
Of some false traitor holds command.

2.

"Ill fares the fainting Palmer, placed
'Mid Hebron's rocks or Rana's waste,—
Ill when the scorching sun is high,
And the expected font is dry,—
Worse when his guide o'er sand and heath,
The barbarous Copt, has plann'd his death.

3.

"Ill fares the Knight with buckler cleft,
And ill when of his helm bereft,—

Ill when his steed to earth is flung,
Or from his grasp his falchion wrung;
But worse, if instant ruin token,
When he lists rede by woman spoken."—

X.

"How now, fond boy?—Canst thou think [ill,"
Said Harold, "of fair Metelill?"—
"She may be fair," the Page replied,
As through the strings he ranged,—
"She may be fair; but yet," he cried,
And then the strain he changed,——

SONG.

1.

"She may be fair," he sang, "but yet
Far fairer have I seen
Than she, for all her locks of jet,
And eyes so dark and sheen.
Were I a Danish knight in arms,
As one day I may be,
My heart should own no foreign charms,—
A Danish maid for me.

2.

"I love my fathers' northern land,
Where the dark pine-trees grow,
And the bold Baltic's echoing strand
Looks o'er each grassy oe.
I love to mark the lingering sun,
From Denmark loath to go,
And leaving on the billows bright,
To cheer the short-lived summer night,
A path of ruddy glow.

3.

"But most the northern maid I love,
With breast like Denmark's snow,
And form as fair as Denmark's pine,
Who loves with purple heath to twine
Her locks of sunny glow;
And sweetly blends that shade of gold
With the cheek's rosy hue,
And Faith might for her mirror hold
That eye of matchless blue.

4.

"'Tis hers the manly sports to love
That southern maidens fear,
To bend the bow by stream and grove,
And lift the hunter's spear.
She can her chosen champion's flight
With eye undazzled see,
Clasp him victorious from the strife,
Or on his corpse yield up her life,—
A Danish maid for me!"

XI.

Then smiled the Dane—"Thou cast so
The virtues of our maidens tell, [well
Half could I wish my choice had been
Blue eyes, and hair of golden sheen,
And lofty soul;—yet what of ill
Hast thou to charge on Metelill?"
"Nothing on her," young Gunnar said,
"But her base sire's ignoble trade.
Her mother, too—the general fame
Hath given to Jutta evil name,
And in her grey eye is a flame
Art cannot hide, nor fear can tame.—
That sordid woodman's peasant cot
Twice have thine honour'd footsteps
sought,
And twice return'd with such ill rede
As sent thee on some desperate deed."

XII.

"Thou errest; Jutta wisely said,
He that comes suitor to a maid,
Ere link'd in marriage, should provide
Lands and a dwelling for his bride—
My father's, by the Tyne and Wear,
I have reclaim'd."—"O, all too dear,
And all too dangerous the prize,
E'en were it won," young Gunnar cries,—
"And then this Jutta's fresh device,
That thou shouldst seek, a heathen Dane,
From Durham's priests a boon to gain,
When thou hast left their vassals slain
In their own halls!"—Flash'd Harold's
eye,
Thunder'd his voice—"False Page, you lie!
The castle, hall and tower, is mine,
Built by old Witikind on Tyne.
The wild-cat will defend his den,
Fights for her nest the timid wren;
And think'st thou I'll forego my right
For dread of monk or monkish knight?
Up and away, that deepening bell
Doth of the Bishop's conclave tell.
Thither will I, in manner due,
As Jutta bade, my claim to sue;
And, if to right me they are loath,
Then woe to church and chapter both!"
Now shift the scene, and let the curtain
fall, [hall,
And our next entry be Saint Cuthbert's

CANTO FOURTH.

I.

FULL many a bard hath sung the solemn
gloom
Of the long Gothic aisle and stone-
ribb'd roof,
O'er-canopying shrine, and gorgeous
tomb,
Carved screen, and altar glimmering far
aloof,
And blending with the shade,—a match-
less proof [cold;
Of high devotion, which hath now wax'd
Yet legends say, that Luxury's brute
hoof
Intruded oft within such sacred fold,
Like step of Bel's false priest, track'd in
his fane of old.

Well pleased am I, howe'er, that when the rout [to come,
Of our rude neighbours whilome deign'd
Uncall'd, and eke unwelcome, to sweep out [of Rome,
And cleanse our chancel from the rags
They spoke not on our ancient fane the doom [own,
To which their bigot zeal gave o'er their
But spared the martyr'd saint and storied tomb, [stone,
Though papal miracles had graced the
And though the aisles still loved the organ's swelling tone.

And deem not, though 'tis now my part to paint [gold,
A Prelate sway'd by love of power and
That all who wore the mitre of our Saint
Like to ambitious Aldingar I hold;
Since both in modern times and days of old [atone
I' sate on those whose virtues might
Their predecessors' frailties trebly told;
Matthew and Morton we as such may own—
And such (if fame speak truth) the honour'd Barrington.

II.

But now to earlier and to ruder times,
As subject meet, I tune my rugged rhymes,
Telling how fairly the chapter was met,
And rood and books in seemly order set;
Huge brass-clasp'd volumes, which the hand
Of studious priest but rarely scann'd,
Now on fair carvèd desk display'd,
'Twas theirs the solemn scene to aid.
O'erhead with many a scutcheon graced,
And quaint devices interlaced,
A labyrinth of crossing rows,
The roof in lessening arches shows;
Beneath its shade placed proud and high,
With footstool and with canopy,
Sate Aldingar,—and prelate ne'er
More haughty graced Saint Cuthbert's chair;
Canons and deacons were placed below,
In due degree and lengthen'd row.
Unmoved and silent each sat there,
Like image in his oaken chair;
Nor head, nor hand, nor foot they stirr'd,
Nor lock of hair, nor tress of beard;
And of their eyes severe alone
The twinkle show'd they were not stone.

III.

The Prelate was to speech address'd,
Each head sunk reverent on each breast;
But ere his voice was heard—without
Arose a wild tumultuous shout,
Offspring of wonder mix'd with fear,
Such as in crowded streets we hear
Hailing the flames, that, bursting out,
Attract yet scare the rabble rout.
Ere it had ceased, a giant hand
Shook oaken door and iron band,
Till oak and iron both gave way,
Clash'd the long bolts, the hinges bray,
And, ere upon angel or saint they can call,
Stands Harold the Dauntless in midst of the hall.

IV.

"Now save ye, my masters, both rochet and rood, [hood!
From Bishop with mitre to Deacon with
For here stands Count Harold, old Witikind's son, [ancestors won."
Come to sue for the lands which his
The Prelate look'd round him with sore troubled eye,
Unwilling to grant, yet afraid to deny;
While each Canon and Deacon who heard the Dane speak, [week:—
To be safely at home would have fasted a
Then Aldingar roused him, and answer'd again, [not obtain;
"Thou suest for a boon which thou canst
The Church hath no fiefs for an unchristen'd Dane. [given,
Thy father was wise, and his treasure hath
That the priests of a chantry might hymn him to heaven; [as his due,
And the fiefs which whilome he possess'd
Have lapsed to the Church, and been granted anew
To Anthony Conyers and Alberic Vere,
For the service Saint Cuthbert's bless'd banner to bear, [foray the Wear;
When the bands of the North come to
Then disturb not our conclave with wrangling or blame, [as ye came."
But in peace and in patience pass hence

V.

Loud laugh'd the stern Pagan,—"They're free from the care [Vere,—
Of fief and of service, both Conyers and
Six feet of your chancel is all they will need,
A buckler of stone and a corslet of lead.—
Ho, Gunnar!—the tokens;"—and, sever'd anew, [threw.
A head and a hand on the altar he
Then shudder'd with terror both Canon and Monk, [tenance shrunk,
They knew the glazed eye and the coun-
And of Anthony Conyers the half-grizzled hair,
And the scar on the hand of Sir Alberic Vere.

There was not a churchman or priest that was there, [him to prayer.
But grew pale at the sight, and betook

VI.

Count Harold laugh'd at their looks of fear: [bear?
"Was this the hand should your banner
Was that the head should wear the casque
In battle at the Church's task?
Was it to such you gave the place
Of Harold with the heavy mace?
Find me between the Wear and Tyne
A knight will wield this club of mine,—
Give him my fiefs, and I will say
There's wit beneath the cowl of grey."
He raised it, rough with many a stain,
Caught from crush'd skull and spouting
He wheel'd it that it shrilly sung, [brain!
And the aisles echoed as it swung,
Then dash'd it down with sheer descent,
And split King Osric's monument.—
"How like ye this music? How trow ye the hand [of its land?
That can wield such a mace may be reft
No answer?—I spare ye a space to agree,
And Saint Cuthbert inspire you, a saint if he be. [strokes on your bell,
Ten strides through your chancel, ten
And again I am with you—grave fathers, farewell."

VII.

He turn'd from their presence, he clash'd the oak door, [the floor;
And the clang of his stride died away on
And his head from his bosom the Prelate uprears [disappears.
With a ghost-seer's look when the ghost
"Ye priests of Saint Cuthbert, now give me your rede, [need!
For never of counsel had Bishop more
Were the arch-fiend incarnate in flesh and in bone, [were his own.
The language, the look, and the laugh
In the bounds of Saint Cuthert there is not a knight [in fight;
Dare confront in our quarrel yon goblin
Then rede me aright to his claim to reply,
'Tis unlawful to grant, and 'tis death to deny."

VIII.

On venison and malmsie that morning had fed [said:
The Cellarer Vinsauf—'twas thus that he
"Delay till to-morrow the Chapter's reply;
Let the feast be spread fair, and the wine be pour'd high: [is ours—
If he's mortal he drinks,—if he drinks, he
His bracelets of iron,—his bed in our
This man had a laughing eye, [towers."
Trust not, friends, when such you spy;

A beaker's depth he well could drain,
Revel, sport, and jest amain—
The haunch of the deer and the grape's bright dye
Never bard loved them better than I;
But sooner than Vinsauf fill'd me my wine,
Pass'd me his jest, and laugh'd at mine,
Though the buck were of Bearpark, of Bordeaux the vine,
With the dullest hermit I'd rather dine
On an oaken cake and a draught of the Tyne.

IX.

Walwayn the leech spoke next—he knew
Each plant that loves the sun and dew,
But special those whose juice can gain
Dominion o'er the blood and brain;
The peasant who saw him by pale moon-beam
Gathering such herbs by bank and stream,
Deem'd his thin form and soundless tread
Were those of wanderer from the dead.—
"Vinsauf, thy wine," he said, "hath power,
Our gyves are heavy, strong our tower;
Yet three drops from this flask of mine,
More strong than dungeons, gyves, or
Shall give him prison under ground [wine,
More dark, more narrow, more profound.
Short rede, good rede, let Harold have—
A dog's death, and a heathen's grave."
I have lain on a sick man's bed,
Watching for hours for the leech's tread,
As if I deem'd that his presence alone
Were of power to bid my pain begone;
I have listed his words of comfort given,
As if to oracles from heaven; [door,
I have counted his steps from my chamber
And bless'd them when they were heard no more;— [should nigh,
But sooner than Walwayn my sick couch
My choice were, by leech-craft unaided, to die.

X.

"Such service done in fervent zeal
The Church may pardon and conceal,"
The doubtful Prelate said, "but ne'er
The counsel e'er the act should hear.—
Anselm of Jarrow, advise us now,
The stamp of wisdom is on thy brow;
Thy days, thy nights, in cloister pent,
Are still to mystic learning lent;—
Anselm of Jarrow, in thee is my hope,
Thou well may'st give counsel to Prelate or Pope."

XI.

Answer'd the Prior—"'Tis wisdom's use
Still to delay what we dare not refuse:
Ere granting the boon he comes hither to
Shape for the giant gigantic task; [ask,

Let us see how a step so sounding can tread
In paths of darkness, danger, and dread;
He may not, he will not, impugn our decree,
That calls but for proof of his chivalry;
And were Guy to return, or Sir Bevis the Strong, [them long—
Our wilds have adventure might cumber
The Castle of Seven Shields"——"Kind Anselm, no more! [door."
The step of the Pagan approaches the
The churchmen were hush'd.—In his mantle of skin, [Harold strode in.
With his mace on his shoulder, Count
There was foam on his lips, there was fire in his eye, [nigh.
For, chafed by attendance, his fury was
"Ho! Bishop," he said, "dost thou grant me my claim? [flame?"—
Or must I assert it by falchion and

XII.

"On thy suit, gallant Harold," the Bishop replied, [decide,
In accents which trembled, "we may not
Until proof of your strength and your valour we saw— [the law."—
'Tis not that we doubt them, but such is
"And would you, Sir Prelate, have Harold make sport [herd in thy court?
For the cowls and the shavelings that
Say what shall he do?—From the shrine shall he tear [in air,
The lead bier of thy patron, and heave it
And through the long chancel make Cuthbert take wing, [the sling?"—
With the speed of a bullet dismiss'd from
"Nay, spare such probation," the Cellarer said, [task shall be read.
"From the mouth of our minstrels thy
While the wine sparkles high in the goblet of gold, [told;
And the revel is loudest, thy task shall be
And thyself, gallant Harold, shall, hearing it, tell [lings, meant well."
That the Bishop, his cowls, and his shave-

XIII.

Loud revell'd the guests, and the goblets loud rang, [sang;
But louder the minstrel, Hugh Meneville,
And Harold, the hurry and pride of whose soul, [control,
E'en when verging to fury, own'd music's
Still bent on the harper his broad sable eye,
And often untasted the goblet pass'd by;
Than wine, or than wassail, to him was more dear [hear;
The minstrel's high tale of enchantment to
And the Bishop that day might of Vinsauf complain [in vain.
That his art had but wasted his wine-casks

XIV.

THE CASTLE OF THE SEVEN SHIELDS.

A Ballad.

THE Druid Urien had daughters seven,
Their skill could call the moon from heaven;
So fair their forms and so high their fame, [came.
That seven proud kings for their suitors
King Mador and Rhys came from Powis and Wales, [were their nails
Unshorn was their hair, and unpruned
From Strath-Clwyde was Ewain, and Ewain was lame, [loway came.
And the red-bearded Donald from Gal-
Lot, King of Lodon, was hunchback'd from youth;
Dunmail of Cumbria had never a tooth;
But Adolf of Bambrough, Northumberland's heir, [was fair.
Was gay and was gallant, was young and
There was strife 'mongst the sisters, for each one would have [brave;
For husband King Adolf, the gallant and
And envy bred hate, and hate urged them to blows, [Arch-fiend arose!
When the firm earth was cleft, and the
He swore to the maidens their wish to fulfil— [his will.
They swore to the foe they would work by
A spindle and distaff to each hath he given, [of heaven.
"Now hearken my spell," said the Outcast
"Ye shall ply these spindles at midnight hour,
And for every spindle shall rise a tower,
Where the right shall be feeble, the wrong shall have power, [mour."
And there shall ye dwell with your para-
Beneath the pale moonlight they sate on the wold, [never be told;
And the rhymes which they chanted must
And as the black wool from the distaff they sped, [moisten'd the thread.
With blood from their bosom they
As light danced the spindles beneath the cold gleam, [dream—
The castle arose like the birth of a
The seven towers ascended like mist from the ground, [surround.
Seven portals defend them, seven ditches
Within that dread castle seven monarchs were wed, [dead;
But six of the seven ere the morning lay
With their eyes all on fire, and their daggers all red, [brian's bed.
Seven damsels surround the Northum-

"Six kingly bridegrooms to death we have done, [won,
Six gallant kingdoms King Adolf hath
Six lovely brides all his pleasures to do,
Or the bed of the seventh shall be husbandless too."

Well chanced it that Adolf the night when he wed, [boune to his bed;
Had confess'd and had sain'd him ere
He sprung from the couch, and his broad-sword he drew,
And there the seven daughters of Urien he slew.

The gate of the castle he bolted and seal'd,
And hung o'er each arch-stone a crown and a shield; [his way,
To the cells of Saint Dunstan then wended
And died in his cloister an anchorite grey.

Seven monarchs' wealth in that castle lies stow'd, [and toad.
The foul fiends brood o'er them like raven
Whoever shall guesten these chambers within, [shall win.
From curfew till matins, that treasure

But manhood grows faint as the world waxes old! [bold,
There lives not in Britain a champion so
So dauntless of heart, and so prudent of brain, [gain,
As to dare the adventure that treasure to

The waste ridge of Cheviot shall wave with the rye, [land fly,
Before the rude Scots shall Northumber-
And the flint cliffs of Bambro' shall melt in the sun,
Before that adventure be perill'd and won.

XV.

"And is this my probation?" wild Harold he said, [bed?—
"Within a lone castle to press a lone
Good even, my Lord Bishop,—Saint Cuthbert to borrow, [to-morrow."
The Castle of Seven Shields receives me

CANTO FIFTH.

I.

DENMARK'S sage courtier to her princely youth,
Granting his cloud an ouzel or a whale,
Spoke, though unwittingly, a partial truth;
For Fantasy embroiders Nature's veil.
The tints of ruddy eve, or dawning pale,
Of the swart thunder-cloud, or silver haze,
Are but the ground-work of the rich detail
Which Fantasy with pencil wild portrays, [muser's gaze.
Blending what seems and is, in the rapt

Nor are the stubborn forms of earth and stone
Less to the Sorceress's empire given;
For not with unsubstantial hues alone,
Caught from the varying surge, or vacant heaven, [ing levin,
From bursting sunbeam, or from flash-
She limns her pictures: on the earth, as air,
Arise her castles, and her car is driven;
And never gazed the eye on scene so fair, [the share.
But of its boasted charms gave Fancy half

II.

Up a wild pass went Harold, bent to prove, [lay;
Hugh Meneville, the adventure of thy
Gunnar pursued his steps in faith and love,
Ever companion of his master's way.
Midward their path, a rock of granite grey [scent,—
From the adjoining cliff had made de-
A barren mass—yet with her drooping spray [battlement,
Had a young birch-tree crown'd its
Twisting her fibrous roots through cranny, flaw, and rent.

This rock and tree could Gunnar's thought engage [eye,
Till Fancy brought the tear-drop to his
And at his master ask'd the timid Page,
"What is the emblem that a bard should spy
In that rude rock and its green canopy?"
And Harold said, "Like to the helmet brave
Of warrior slain in fight it seems to lie,
And these same drooping boughs do o'er it wave [gave."—
Not all unlike the plume his lady's favour

"Ah, no!" replied the Page; "the ill-starr'd love [shown,
Of some poor maid is in the emblem
Whose fates are with some hero's inter-wove,
And rooted on a heart to love unknown.
And as the gentle dews of heaven alone
Nourish those drooping boughs, and as the scathe [stone,
Of the red lightning rends both tree and
So fares it with her unrequited faith,—
Her sole relief is tears—her only refuge death."—

III.

"Thou art a fond fantastic boy,"
Harold replied, "to females coy,
Yet prating still of love;
Even so amid the clash of war
I know thou lov'st to keep afar,
Though destined by thy evil star
With one like me to rove,
Whose business and whose joys are found
Upon the bloody battle-ground.
Yet, foolish trembler as thou art,
Thou hast a nook of my rude heart,
And thou and I will never part;—
Harold would wrap the world in flame
Ere injury on Gunnar came!"

IV.

The grateful Page made no reply,
But turn'd to Heaven his gentle eye,
And clasp'd his hands, as one who said,
"My toils—my wanderings are o'erpaid!"
Then in a gayer, lighter strain,
Compell'd himself to speech again;
And, as they flow'd along,
His words took cadence soft and slow,
And liquid, like dissolving snow,
They melted into song.

V.

"What though through fields of carnage wide
I may not follow Harold's stride,
Yet who with faithful Gunnar's pride
Lord Harold's feats can see?
And dearer than the couch of pride
He loves the bed of grey wolf's hide,
When slumbering by Lord Harold's side
In forest, field, or lea."—

VI.

"Break off!" said Harold, in a tone
Where hurry and surprise were shown,
With some slight touch of fear,—
"Break off! we are not here alone;
A Palmer form comes slowly on!
By cowl, and staff, and mantle known,
My monitor is near.
Now mark him, Gunnar, heedfully;
He pauses by the blighted tree—
Dost see him, youth?—Thou couldst not
When in the vale of Galilee [see
I first beheld his form,
Nor when we met that other while
In Cephalonia's rocky isle,
Before the fearful storm,—
Dost see him now?"—The Page, distraught
With terror, answer'd, "I see nought,
And there is nought to see, [down
Save that the oak's scathed boughs fling
Upon the path a shadow brown,
That, like a pilgrim's dusky gown,
Waves with the waving tree."

VII.

Count Harold gazed upon the oak
As if his eyestrings would have broke,
And then resolvedly said,—
"Be what it will yon phantom grey—
Nor heaven nor hell shall ever say
That for their shadows from his way
Count Harold turn'd dismay'd:
I'll speak him, though his accents fill
My heart with that unwonted thrill
Which vulgar minds call fear.
I will subdue it!"—Forth he strode,
Paused where the blighted oak-tree show'd
Its sable shadow on the road,
And, folding on his bosom broad
His arms, said, "Speak—I hear."

VIII.

The Deep Voice said, "O wild of will,
Furious thy purpose to fulfil—
Heart-sear'd and unrepentant still,
How long, O Harold, shall thy tread
Disturb the slumbers of the dead?
Each step in thy wild way thou makest,
The ashes of the dead thou wakest;
And shout in triumph o'er thy path
The fiends of bloodshed and of wrath.
In this thine hour, yet turn and hear!
For life is brief and judgment near."

IX.

Then ceased The Voice,—The Dane replied
In tones where awe and inborn pride
For mastery strove,—"In vain ye chide
The wolf for ravaging the flock,
Or with its hardness taunt the rock,—
I am as they—my Danish strain
Sends streams of fire through every vein.
Amid thy realms of goule and ghost,
Say, is the fame of Eric lost,
Or Witikind's the Waster, known
Where fame or spoil was to be won;
Whose galleys ne'er bore off a shore
They left not black with flame?—
He was my sire,—and, sprung of him,
That rover merciless and grim,
Can I be soft and tame?
Part hence, and with my crimes no more
upbraid me,
I am that Waster's son, and am but what
he made me."

X.

The Phantom groan'd;—the mountain
shook around,
The fawn and wild doe started at the sound,
The gorse and fern did wildly round them
wave,
As if some sudden storm the impulse gave.
"All thou hast said is truth—Yet on the
head
Of that bad sire let not the charge be laid,

That he, like thee, with unrelenting pace,
From grave to cradle ran the evil race:—
Relentless in his avarice and ire, [fire;
Churches and towns he gave to sword and
Shed blood like water, wasted every land,
Like the destroying angel's burning brand;
Fulfill'd whate'er of ill might be invented,
Yes—all these things he did—he did, but
he REPENTED!
Perchance it is part of his punishment still,
That his offspring pursues his example of
ill. [next shake thee,
But thou, when thy tempest of wrath shall
Gird thy loins for resistance, my son, and
awake thee; soever,
If thou yield'st to thy fury, how tempted
The gate of repentance shall ope for thee
NEVER!"

XII.

"He is gone," said Lord Harold, and
gazed as he spoke; [of the oak.
"There is nought on the path but the shade
He is gone, whose strange presence my
feeling oppress'd, berer's breast.
Like the night-hag that sits on the slum-
My heart beats as thick as a fugitive's tread,
And cold dews drop from my brow and
my head.—
Ho! Gunnar, the flasket yon almoner gave;
He said that three drops would recall from
the grave. [leech-craft has power,
For the first time Count Harold owns
Or, his courage to aid, lacks the juice of
a flower!" [wayn had fill'd
The page gave the flasket, which Wal-
With the juice of wild roots that his art
had distill'd— [breath,
So baneful their influence on all that had
One drop had been frenzy, and two had
been death. [shrill,
Harold took it, but drank not; for jubilee
And music and clamour were heard on the
hill, [and o'er stone,
And down the deep pathway, o'er stock
The train of a bridal came blithesomely on;
There was song, there was pipe, there was
timbrel, and still
The burden was, "Joy to the fair Metelill!"

XII.

Harold might see from his high stance,
Himself unseen, that train advance
With mirth and melody;—
On horse and foot a mingled throng,
Measuring their steps to bridal song
And bridal minstrelsy;
And ever when the blithesome rout
Lent to the song their choral shout,
Redoubling echoes roll'd about,
While echoing cave and cliff sent out
The answering symphony
Of all those mimic notes which dwell
In hollow rock and sounding dell.

XIII.

Joy shook his torch above the band,
By many a various passion fann'd;—
As elemental sparks can feed
On essence pure and coarsest weed,
Gentle, or stormy, or refined,
Joy takes the colours of the mind.
Lightsome and pure, but unrepress'd,
He fired the bridegroom's gallant breast;
More feebly strove with maiden fear,
Yet still joy glimmer'd through the tear
On the bride's blushing cheek, that shows
Like dewdrop on the budding rose;
While Wulfstane's gloomy smile declared
The glee that selfish avarice shared,
And pleased revenge and malice high
Joy's semblance took in Jutta's eye.
On dangerous adventure sped,
The witch deem'd Harold with the dead,
For thus that morn her Demon said:
"If, ere the set of sun, be tied
The knot 'twixt bridegroom and his bride,
The Dane shall have no power of ill
O'er William and o'er Metelill."
And the pleased witch made answer,
"Then
Must Harold have pass'd from the paths of
men!
Evil repose may his spirit have,—
May hemlock and mandrake find root in
his grave,—
May his death-sleep be dogged by dreams
of dismay,
And his waking be worse at the answering
day."

XIV.

Such was their various mood of glee
Blent in one shout of ecstasy.
But still when Joy is brimming highest,
Of Sorrow and Misfortune nighest,
Of Terror with her ague cheek,
And lurking Danger, sages speak:—
These haunt each path, but chief they lay
Their snares beside the primrose way.—
Thus found that bridal band their path
Beset by Harold in his wrath.
Trembling beneath his maddening mood,
High on a rock the giant stood;
His shout was like the doom of death
Spoke o'er their heads that pass'd beneath.
His destined victims might not spy
The reddening terrors of his eye,—
The frown of rage that writhed his face,—
The lip that foam'd like boar's in chase;
But all could see—and, seeing, all
Bore back to shun the threaten'd fall—
The fragment which their giant foe
Rent from the cliff and heaved to throw.

XV.

Backward they bore;—yet are there two
For battle who prepare:
No pause of dread Lord William knew
Ere his good blade was bare;
And Wulfstane bent his fatal yew,
But ere the silken cord he drew,
As hurl'd from Hecla's thunder, flew
That ruin through the air!
Full on the outlaw's front it came,
And all that late had human name,
And human face, and human frame,
That lived, and moved, and had free will
To choose the path of good or ill,
Is to its reckoning gone;
And nought of Wulfstane rests behind,
Save that beneath that stone,
Half-buried in the dinted clay,
A red and shapeless mass there lay
Of mingled flesh and bone!

XVI.

As from the bosom of the sky
The eagle darts amain,
Three bounds from yonder summit high
Placed Harold on the plain.
As the scared wild-fowl scream and fly,
So fled the bridal train;
As 'gainst the eagle's peerless might
The noble falcon dares the fight,
But dares the fight in vain,
So fought the bridegroom; from his hand
The Dane's rude mace has struck his brand,
Its glittering fragments strew the sand,
Its lord lies on the plain.
Now, Heaven! take noble William's part,
And melt that yet unmelted heart,
Or, ere his bridal hour depart,
The hapless bridegroom's slain!

XVII.

Count Harold's frenzied rage is high,
There is a death-fire in his eye,
Deep furrows on his brow are trench'd,
His teeth are set, his hand is clench'd,
The foam upon his lip is white,
His deadly arm is up to smite!
But as the mace aloft he swung,
To stop the blow young Gunnar sprung,
Around his master's knees he clung,
And cried, "In mercy spare!
O, think upon the words of fear
Spoke by that visionary Seer,
The crisis he foretold is here,—
Grant mercy,—or despair!"
This word suspended Harold's mood,
Yet still with arm upraised he stood,
And visage like the headsman's rude
That pauses for the sign.
"O mark thee with the blessed rood,"
The Page implored; "speak word of good,
Resist the fiend, or be subdued!"
He sign'd the cross divine—
Instant his eye hath human light,
Less red, less keen, less fiercely bright;
His brow relax'd the obdurate frown,
The fatal mace sinks gently down,
He turns and strides away;
Yet oft, like revellers who leave
Unfinish'd feast, looks back to grieve,
As if repenting the reprieve
He granted to his prey. [given,
Yet still of forbearance one sign hath he
And fierce Witikind's son made one step
towards heaven.

XVIII.

But though his dreaded footsteps part,
Death is behind and shakes his dart;
Lord William on the plain is lying,
Beside him Metelill seems dying!—
Bring odours—essences in haste—
And lo! a flasket richly chased,—
But Jutta the elixir proves
Ere pouring it for those she loves.—
Then Walwayn's potion was not wasted,
For when three drops the hag had tasted,
So dismal was her yell,
Each bird of evil omen woke,
The raven gave his fatal croak,
And shriek'd the night-crow from the oak,
The screech-owl from the thicket broke,
And flutter'd down the dell!
So fearful was the sound and stern,
The slumbers of the full-gorged erne
Were startled, and from furze and fern
Of forest and of fell,
The fox and famish'd wolf replied
(For wolves then prowl'd the Cheviot side).
From mountain head to mountain head
The unhallow'd sounds around were sped;
But when their latest echo fled,
The sorceress on the ground lay dead.

XIX.

Such was the scene of blood and woes,
With which the bridal morn arose
Of William and of Metelill;
But oft, when dawning 'gins to spread,
The summer morn peeps dim and red
Above the eastern hill,
Ere, bright and fair, upon his road
The King of Splendour walks abroad;
So when this cloud had pass'd away,
Bright was the noontide of their day,
And all serene its setting ray.

CANTO SIXTH.

I.

WELL do I hope that this my minstrel tale
Will tempt no traveller from southern fields,

Whether in tilbury, barouche, or mail,
To view the Castle of these Seven Proud Shields.
Small confirmation its condition yields
To Meneville's high lay,—No towers are seen [builds,
On the wild heath, but those that Fancy
And, save a fosse that tracks the moor with green, [there have been.
Is nought remains to tell of what may

And yet grave authors, with the no small waste [spot
Of their grave time, have dignified the
By theories, to prove the fortress placed
By Roman bands, to curb the invading Scot. [quote,
Hutchinson, Horsley, Camden, I might
But rather choose the theory less civil
Of boors, who, origin of things forgot,
Refer still to the origin of evil,
And for their master-mason choose that master-fiend the Devil.

II.

Therefore, I say, it was on fiend-built towers [wondering gaze,
That stout Count Harold bent his
When evening dew was on the heather flowers, [tain blaze,
And the last sunbeams made the moun-
And tinged the battlements of other days [down.—
With the bright level light ere sinking
Illumined thus, the Dauntless Dane surveys [portal frown,
The Seven Proud Shields that o'er the
And on their blazons traced high marks of old renown.

A wolf North Wales had on his armour-coat, [stag;
And Rhys of Powis-land a couchant
Strath-Clwyde's strange emblem was a stranded boat,
Donald of Galloway's a trotting nag;
A corn-sheaf gilt was fertile Lodon's brag; [worn;
A dudgeon-dagger was by Dunmail
Northumbrian Adolf gave a sea-beat crag [were borne
Surmounted by a cross—such signs
Upon these antique shields, all wasted now and worn.

III.

These scann'd, Count Harold sought the castle-door, [decay;
Whose ponderous bolts were rusted to
Yet till that hour adventurous knight forbore
The unobstructed passage to essay.

More strong than armèd warders in array,
And obstacle more sure than bolt or bar,
Sate in the portal Terror and Dismay,
While Superstition, who forbade to war
With foes of other mould than mortal clay,
Cast spells across the gate, and barr'd the onward way.

Vain now these spells; for soon with heavy clank [push'd,
The feebly-fasten'd gate was inward
And, as it oped, through that emblazon'd rank [rush'd
Of antique shields, the wind of evening
With sound most like a groan, and then was hush'd. [could hear
Is none who on such spot such sounds
But to his heart the blood had faster rush'd; [was dear—
Yet to bold Harold's breast that throb
It spoke of danger nigh, but had no touch of fear.

IV.

Yet Harold and his Page no signs have traced
Within the castle, that of danger show'd;
For still the halls and courts were wild and waste, [turers trode.
As through their precincts the adven-
The seven huge towers rose stately, tall, and broad,
Each tower presenting to their scrutiny
A hall in which a king might make abode, [and high,
And fast beside, garnish'd both proud
Was placed a bower for rest in which a king might lie.

As if a bridal there of late had been,
Deck'd stood the table in each gorgeous hall; [ween,
And yet it was two hundred years, I
Since date of that unhallow'd festival.
Flagons, and ewers, and standing cups, were all
Of tarnished gold, or silver nothing clear,
With throne begilt, and canopy of pall,
And tapestry clothed the walls with fragments sear—
Frail as the spider's mesh did that rich woof appear.

V.

In every bower, as round a hearse, was hung
A dusky crimson curtain o'er the bed,
And on each couch in ghastly wise were flung
The wasted relics of a monarch dead;

Barbaric ornaments around were spread,
Vests twined with gold, and chains of precious stone,
And golden circlets, meet for monarch's head;
While grinn'd, as if in scorn amongst them thrown,
The wearer's fleshless skull, alike with dust bestrown.

For these were they who, drunken with delight,
On pleasure's opiate pillow laid their head,
For whom the bride's shy footsteps, slow and light,
Was changed ere morning to the murderer's tread.
For human bliss and woe in the frail thread
Of human life are all so closely twined,
That till the shears of Fate the texture shred,
The close succession cannot be disjoin'd,
Nor dare we, from one hour, judge that which comes behind.

VI.

But where the work of vengeance had been done,
In that seventh chamber, was a sterner sight;
There of the witch-brides lay each skeleton,
Still in the posture as to death unright;
For this lay prone, by one blow slain outright;
And that, as one who struggled long in dying;
One bony hand held knife, as if to smite;
One bent on fleshless knees, as mercy crying;
One lay across the door, as kill'd in act of flying.

The stern Dane smiled this charnel-house to see,—
For his chafed thought return'd to Metehill;—
And "Well," he said, "hath woman's perfidy,
Empty as air, as water volatile,
Been here avenged.—The origin of ill
Through woman rose, the Christian doctrine saith:
Nor deem I, Gunnar, that thy minstrel skill
Can show example where a woman's breath
Hath made a true-love vow, and, tempted, kept her faith."

VII.

The minstrel-boy half smiled, half sigh'd,
And his half-filling eyes he dried,
And said, "The theme I should but wrong,
Unless it were my dying song
(Our Scalds have said, in dying hour
The Northern harp has treble power),
Else could I tell of woman's faith,
Defying danger, scorn, and death.
Firm was that faith,—as diamond stone
Pure and unflaw'd,—her love unknown,
And unrequited;—firm and pure,
Her stainless faith could all endure;
From clime to clime,—from place to place,
Through want, and danger, and disgrace,
A wanderer's wayward steps could trace.—
All this she did, and guerdon none
Required, save that her burial-stone
Should make at length the secret known,
'Thus hath a faithful woman done.'—
Not in each breast such truth is laid,
But Eivir was a Danish maid."—

VIII.

"Thou art a wild enthusiast," said
Count Harold, "for thy Danish maid;
And yet, young Gunnar, I will own
Hers were a faith to rest upon.
But Eivir sleeps beneath her stone,
And all resembling her are gone.
What maid e'er show'd such constancy
In plighted faith, like thine to me?
But couch thee, boy; the darksome shade
Falls thickly round, nor be dismay'd
Because the dead are by.
They were as we; our little day
O'erspent, and we shall be as they.
Yet near me, Gunnar, be thou laid,
Thy couch upon my mantle made,
That thou mayst think, should fear invade,
Thy master slumbers nigh."
Thus couch'd they in that dread abode,
Until the beams of dawning glow'd.

IX.

An alter'd man Lord Harold rose,
When he beheld that dawn unclose—
There's trouble in his eyes,
And traces on his brow and cheek
Of mingled awe and wonder speak:
"My page," he said, "arise;—
Leave we this place, my page."—No more
He utter'd till the castle door
They cross'd—but there he paused and said,
"My wildness hath awaked the dead—
Disturb'd the sacred tomb!
Methought this night I stood on high,
Where Hecla roars in middle sky,
And in her cavern'd gulfs could spy
The central place of doom;
And there before my mortal eye
Souls of the dead came flitting by,
Whom fiends, with many a fiendish cry,
Bore to that evil den!
My eyes grew dizzy, and my brain
Was wilder'd, as the elvish train,
With shriek and howl, dragg'd on amain
Those who had late been men.

X.

"With haggard eyes and streaming hair,
Jutta the Sorceress was there,

And there pass'd Wulfstane, lately slain,
All crush'd and foul with bloody stain.—
More had I seen, but that uprose
A whirlwind wild, and swept the snows;
And with such sound as when at need
A champion spurs his horse to speed,
Three arm'd knights rush on, who lead
Caparison'd a sable steed.
Sable their harness, and there came
Through their closed visors sparks of flame.
The first proclaim'd, in sounds of fear,
'Harold the Dauntless, welcome here!'
The next cried, 'Jubilee! we've won
Count Witikind the Waster's son!'
And the third rider sternly spoke,
'Mount, in the name of Zernebock!—
From us, O Harold, were thy powers,—
Thy strength, thy dauntlessness, are ours;
Nor think, a vassal thou of hell,
With hell can strive.' The fiend spoke true!
My inmost soul the summons knew,
As captives know the knell
That says the headsman's sword is bare,
And, with an accent of despair,
Commands them quit their cell.
I felt resistance was in vain,
My foot had that fell stirrup ta'en,
My hand was on the fatal mane,
When to my rescue sped
That Palmer's visionary form,
And—like the passing of a storm—
The demons yell'd and fled!

XI.

"His sable cowl, flung back, reveal'd
The features it before conceal'd;
And, Gunnar, I could find
In him whose counsels strove to stay
So oft my course on wilful way,
My father Witikind!
Doom'd for his sins, and doom'd for mine,
A wanderer upon earth to pine
Until his son shall turn to grace,
And smooth for him a resting-place.—
Gunnar, he must not haunt in vain
This world of wretchedness and pain:
I 'll tame my wilful heart to live
In peace—to pity and forgive—
And thou, for so the Vision said,
Must in thy Lord's repentance aid.
Thy mother was a prophetess,
He said, who by her skill could guess
How close the fatal textures join
Which knit thy thread of life with mine;
Then, dark, he hinted of disguise
She framed to cheat too curious eyes,
That not a moment might divide
Thy fated footsteps from my side.
Methought while thus my sire did teach,
I caught the meaning of his speech,
Yet seems its purport doubtful now."
His hand then sought his thoughtful brow,
Then first he mark'd, that in the tower
His glove was left at waking hour.

XII.

Trembling at first, and deadly pale,
Had Gunnar heard the vision'd tale;
But when he learn'd the dubious close,
He blush'd like any opening rose,
And, glad to hide his tell-tale cheek,
Hied back that glove of mail to seek;
When soon a shriek of deadly dread
Summon'd his master to his aid.

XIII.

What sees Count Harold in that bower,
So late his resting-place?—
The semblance of the Evil Power,
Adored by all his race!
Odin in living form stood there,
His cloak the spoils of Polar bear;
For plumy crest a meteor shed
Its gloomy radiance o'er his head,
Yet veil'd its haggard majesty
To the wild lightnings of his eye.
Such height was his, as when in stone
O'er Upsal's giant altar shown:
So flow'd his hoary beard;
Such was his lance of mountain-pine,
So did his sevenfold buckler shine;—
But when his voice he rear'd,
Deep, without harshness, slow and strong,
The powerful accents roll'd along,
And, while he spoke, his hand was laid
On Captive Gunnar's shrinking head.

XIV.

"Harold," he said, "what rage is thine,
To quit the worship of thy line,
To leave thy Warrior-God?—
With me is glory or disgrace,
Mine is the onset and the chase,
Embattled hosts before my face
Are wither'd by a nod.
Wilt thou then forfeit that high seat
Deserved by many a dauntless feat,
Among the heroes of thy line,
Eric and fiery Thorarine?—
Thou wilt not. Only I can give
The joys for which the valiant live,
Victory and vengeance—only I
Can give the joys for which they die,
The immortal tilt—the banquet full, [skull.
The brimming draught from foeman's
Mine art thou, witness this thy glove,
The faithful pledge of vassal's love."—

XV.

"Tempter," said Harold, firm of heart,
"I charge thee, hence! whate'er thou art,

I do defy thee—and resist
The kindling frenzy of my breast,
Waked by thy words; and of my mail,
Nor glove, nor buckler, splent, nor nail,
Shall rest with thee—that youth release,
And God, or Demon, part in peace."—
"Eivir," the Shape replied, "is mine,
Mark'd in the birth-hour with my sign.
Think'st thou that priest with drops of spray
Could wash that blood-red mark away?
Or that a borrow'd sex and name
Can abrogate a Godhead's claim?"
Thrill'd this strange speech through Harold's brain,
He clench'd his teeth in high disdain,
For not his new-born faith subdued
Some tokens of his ancient mood.—
"Now, by the hope so lately given
Of better trust and purer heaven,
I will assail thee, fiend!"—Then rose
His mace, and with a storm of blows
The mortal and the Demon close.

XVI.

Smoke roll'd above, fire flash'd around,
Darken'd the sky and shook the ground;
But not the artillery of hell
The bickering lightning, nor the rock
Of turrets to the earthquake's shock,
Could Harold's courage quell.
Sternly the Dane his purpose kept,
And blows on blows resistless heap'd,
Till quail'd that Demon Form,
And—for his power to hurt or kill
Was bounded by a higher will—
Evanish'd in the storm.
Nor paused the Champion of the North,
But raised, and bore his Eivir forth,
From that wild scene of fiendish strife,
To light, to liberty, and life!

XVII.

He placed her on a bank of moss,
A silver runnel bubbled by,
And new-born thoughts his soul engross,
And tremors yet unknown across
His stubborn sinews fly,
The while with timid hand the dew
Upon her brow and neck he threw,
And mark'd how life with rosy hue
On her pale cheek revived anew,
And glimmer'd in her eye.
Inly he said, "That silken tress,—
What blindness mine that could not guess!
Or how could page's rugged dress
That bosom's pride belie?
O, dull of heart, through wild and wave
In search of blood and death to rave,
With such a partner nigh!"

XVIII.

Then in a mirror'd pool he peer'd,
Blamed his rough locks and shaggy beard,
The stains of recent conflict clear'd,—
And thus the Champion proved,
That he fears now who never fear'd,
And loves who never loved.
And Eivir—life is on her cheek,
And yet she will not move or speak,
Nor will her eyelid fully ope;
Perchance it loves, that half-shut eye,
Through its long fringe, reserved and shy,
Affection's opening dawn to spy;
And the deep blush, which bids its dye
O'er cheek, and brow, and bosom fly,
Speaks shame-facedness and hope.

XIX.

But vainly seems the Dane to seek
For terms his new-born love to speak,—
For words, save those of wrath and wrong,
Till now were strangers to his tongue;
So, when he raised the blushing maid,
In blunt and honest terms he said
('Twere well that maids, when lovers woo,
Heard none more soft, were all as true),
"Eivir! since thou for many a day
Hast follow'd Harold's wayward way,
It is but meet that in the line
Of after-life I follow thine.
To-morrow is Saint Cuthbert's tide,
And we will grace his altar's side,
A Christian knight and Christian bride;
And of Witikind's son shall the marvel be said,
That on the same morn he was christen'd and wed."

CONCLUSION.

And now, Ennui, what ails thee, weary maid? [sorrow?
And why these listless looks of yawning sorrow?
No need to turn the page, as if 'twere lead, [row.—
Or fling aside the volume till to-mor-
Be cheer'd—'tis ended—and I will not borrow,
To try thy patience more, one anecdote
From Bartholine, or Perinskiold, or Snorro.
Then pardon thou thy minstrel, who hath wrote [a note.
A Tale six cantos long, yet scorn'd to add

CONTRIBUTIONS TO MINSTRELSY OF THE SCOTTISH BORDER.

Imitations of the Ancient Ballad.

THOMAS THE RHYMER.

IN THREE PARTS.

PART FIRST.—ANCIENT.

Few personages are so renowned in tradition as Thomas of Ercildoune, known by the appellation of *The Rhymer*. Uniting, or supposing to unite, in his person the powers of poetical composition and of vaticination, his memory, even after the lapse of five hundred years, is regarded with veneration by his countrymen. To give anything like a certain history of this remarkable man would be indeed difficult; but the curious may derive some satisfaction from the particulars here brought together.

It is agreed on all hands that the residence, and probably the birthplace, of this ancient bard was Ercildoune, a village situated upon the Leader, two miles above its junction with the Tweed. The ruins of an ancient tower are still pointed out as the Rhymer's castle. The uniform tradition bears that his surname was Lermont, or Learmont; and that the appellation of *The Rhymer* was conferred on him in consequence of his poetical compositions. There remains, nevertheless, some doubt upon the subject.

We are better able to ascertain the period at which Thomas of Ercildoune lived, being the latter end of the thirteenth century. I am inclined to place his death a little farther back than Mr. Pinkerton, who supposes that he was alive in 1300.—(*List of Scottish Poets.*)

It cannot be doubted that Thomas of Ercildoune was a remarkable and important person in his own time, since, very shortly after his death, we find him celebrated as a prophet and as a poet. Whether he himself made any pretensions to the first of these characters, or whether it was gratuitously conferred upon him by the credulity of posterity, it seems difficult to decide. If we may believe Mackenzie, Learmont only versified the prophecies delivered by Eliza, an inspired nun of a convent at Haddington. But of this there seems not to be the most distant proof. On the contrary, all ancient authors, who quote the Rhymer's prophecies, uniformly suppose them to have been emitted by himself.

The popular tale bears that Thomas was carried off, at an early age, to the Fairy Land, where he acquired all the knowledge which made him afterwards so famous. After seven years' residence, he was permitted to return to the earth, to enlighten and astonish his countrymen by his prophetic powers; still, however, remaining bound to return to his royal mistress, when she should intimate her pleasure. Accordingly, while Thomas was making merry with his friends in the Tower of Ercildoune, a person came running in, and told, with marks of fear and astonishment, that a hart and hind had left the neighbouring forest, and were composedly and slowly parading the street of the village. The prophet instantly arose, left his habitation, and followed the wonderful animals to the forest, whence he was never seen to return. According to the popular belief, he still "drees his weird" in Fairy Land, and is one day expected to revisit earth. In the meanwhile, his memory is held in the most profound respect. The Eildon Tree, from beneath the shade of which he delivered his prophecies, now no longer exists; but the spot is marked by a large stone, called Eildon Tree Stone. A neighbouring rivulet takes the name of the Bogle Burn (Goblin Brook), from the Rhymer's supernatural visitants.

It seemed to the Editor unpardonable to dismiss a person so important in Border traditions as the Rhymer, without some further notice than a simple commentary upon the following ballad. It is given from a copy, obtained from a lady residing not far from Ercildoune, corrected and enlarged by one in Mrs. Browne's MSS. The former copy, however, as might be expected, is far from minute as to local description. To this old tale the Editor has ventured to add a Second Part, consisting of a kind of cento, from the printed prophecies vulgarly ascribed to the

Rhymer; and a Third Part, entirely modern, founded upon the tradition of his having returned with the hart and hind to the Land of Faëry. To make his peace with the more severe antiquaries, the Editor has prefixed to the Second Part some remarks on Learmont's prophecies.

TRUE THOMAS lay on Huntlie bank;
A ferlie he spied wi' his ee;
And there he saw a ladye bright,
Come riding down by the Eildon Tree.

Her skirt was o' the grass-green silk,
Her mantle o' the velvet fyne;
At ilka tett of her horse's mane,
Hung fifty siller bells and nine.

True Thomas, he pull'd aff his cap,
And louted low down to his knee,
"All hail, thou mighty Queen of Heaven!
For thy peer on earth I never did see."—

"O no, O no, Thomas," she said,
"That name does not belang to me;
I am but the Queen of fair Elfland,
That am hither come to visit thee.

"Harp and carp, Thomas," she said;
"Harp and carp along wi' me;
And if ye dare to kiss my lips,
Sure of your bodie I will be."—

"Betide me weal, betide me woe,
That weird† shall never daunton me."—
Syne he has kiss'd her rosy lips,
All underneath the Eildon Tree.

"Now, ye maun go wi' me," she said;
"True Thomas, ye maun go wi' me;
And ye maun serve me seven years,
Thro' weal or woe as may chance to be."

She mounted on her milk-white steed!
She's ta'en true Thomas up behind:
And aye, whene'er her bridle rung,
The steed flew swifter than the wind.

O they rade on, and farther on;
The steed gaed swifter than the wind;
Until they reach'd a desert wide,
And living land was left behind.

"Light down, light down, now, true Thomas,
And lean your head upon my knee;
Abide and rest a little space,
And I will show you ferlies three.

"O see ye not yon narrow road,
So thick beset with thorns and briers?
That is the path of righteousness,
Though after it but few enquires.

"And see ye not that braid braid road,
That lies across that lily leven?
That is the path of wickedness,
Though some call it the road to heaven.

"And see not ye that bonny road,
That winds about the fernie brae?
That is the road to fair Elfland,
Where thou and I this night maun gae.

"But, Thomas, ye maun hold your tongue,
Whatever ye may hear or see;
For, if ye speak word in Elfyn land,
Ye'll ne'er get back to your ain countrie."

O they rade on, and farther on,
And they waded through rivers aboon the knee,
And they saw neither sun nor moon,
But they heard the roaring of the sea.

It was mirk, mirk night, and there was nae stern light,
And they waded through red blude to the knee,
For a' the blude that's shed on earth
Rins through the springs o' that countrie.

Syne they came on to a garden green,
And she pu'd an apple frae a tree‡—
"Take this for thy wages, true Thomas;
It will give thee the tongue that can never lie."—

"My tongue is mine ain," true Thomas said;
"A gudely gift ye wad gie to me!
I neither dought to buy nor sell,
At fair or tryst where I may be.

"I dought neither speak to prince or peer,
Nor ask of grace from fair ladye,"—
"Now hold thy peace!" the lady said,
"For as I say, so must it be."—

He has gotten a coat of the even cloth,
And a pair of shoes of velvet green;
And till seven years were gane and past,
True Thomas on earth was never seen.

PART SECOND.—ALTERED FROM ANCIENT PROPHECIES.

The prophecies ascribed to Thomas of Ercildoune have been the principal means of securing to him remembrance "amongst the sons of his people." The author of *Sir Tristrem* would long ago have joined, in the vale of oblivion, "Clerk of Tranent, who wrote the adventure

† That destiny shall never frighten me.

‡ The traditional commentary upon this ballad informs us that the apple was the produce of the fatal Tree of Knowledge, and that the garden was the terrestrial paradise. The repugnance of Thomas to be debarred the use of falsehood, when he might find it convenient, has a comic effect.

of *Schir Gawain*," if, by good hap, the same current of ideas respecting antiquity, which causes Virgil to be regarded as a magician by the Lazaroni of Naples, had not exalted the bard of Ercildoune to the prophetic character. Perhaps, indeed, he himself affected it during his life. We know, at least, for certain, that a belief in his supernatural knowledge was current soon after his death. His prophecies are alluded to by Barbour, by Winton, and by Henry the Minstrel, or *Blind Harry*, as he is usually termed. None of these authors, however, give the words of any of the Rhymer's vaticinations, but merely narrate, historically, his having predicted the events of which they speak. The earliest of the prophecies ascribed to him, which is now extant, is quoted by Mr. Pinkerton from a MS. It is supposed to be a response from Thomas of Ercildoune to a question from the heroic Countess of March, renowned for the defence of the Castle of Dunbar against the English, and termed, in the familiar dialect of her time, *Black Agnes* of Dunbar. This prophecy is remarkable, in so far as it bears very little resemblance to any verses published in the printed copy of the Rhymer's supposed prophecies.

Corspatrick (Comes Patrick), Earl of March, but more commonly taking his title from his castle of Dunbar, acted a noted part during the wars of Edward I. in Scotland. As Thomas of Ercildoune is said to have delivered to him his famous prophecy of King Alexander's death, the Editor has chosen to introduce him into the following ballad. All the prophetic verses are selected from Hart's publication.

WHEN seven years were come and gane,
The sun blink'd fair on pool and stream;
And Thomas lay on Huntlie Bank,
Like one awaken'd from a dream.

He heard the trampling of a steed,
He saw the flash of armour flee,
And he beheld a gallant knight
Come riding down by the Eildon Tree.

He was a stalwart knight, and strong;
Of giant make he 'pear'd to be:
He stirr'd his horse, as he were wode,
Wi' gilded spurs, of faushion free.

Says—"Well met, well met, true Thomas!
Some uncouth ferlies show to me."—
Says—"Christ thee save, Corspatrick brave!
Thrice welcome, good Dunbar, to me!

"Light down, light down, Corspatrick brave,
And I will show thee curses three,
Shall gar fair Scotland greet and grane,
And change the green to the black livery.

"A storm shall roar this very hour,
From Ross's hills to Solway sea."—
"Ye lied, ye lied, ye warlock hoar,
For the sun shines sweet on fauld and lee."—

He put his hand on the Earlie's head;
He show'd him a rock beside the sea,
Where a king lay stiff beneath his steed,†
And steel-dight nobles wiped their ee.

"The neist curse lights on Branxton hills:
By Flodden's high and heathery side,
Shall wave a banner red as blude,
And chieftains throng wi' meikle pride.

"A Scottish King shall come full keen,
The ruddy lion beareth he;
A feather'd arrow sharp, I ween,
Shall make him wink and warre to see.

"When he is bloody, and all to bledde,
Thus to his men he still shall say—
'For God's sake, turn ye back again,
And give yon southern folk a fray!
Why should I lose, the right is mine?
My doom is not to die this day.'†

"Yet turn ye to the eastern hand,
And woe and wonder ye sall see;
How forty thousand spearmen stand,
Where yon rank river meets the sea.

"There shall the lion lose the gylte,
And the libbards bear it clean away;
At Pinkyn Cleuch there shall be spilt
Much gentil bluid that day."—

"Enough, enough of curse and ban;
Some blessings show thou now to me,
Or, by the faith o' my bodie," Corspatrick said,
"Ye shall rue the day ye e'er saw me!"—

"The first of blessings I shall thee show,
Is by a burn, that 's call'd of bread;‡
Where Saxon men shall tine the bow,
And find their arrows lack the head.

"Beside that brigg, out ower that burn,
Where the water bickereth bright and sheen,
Shall many a fallen courser spurn,
And knights shall die in battle keen,

"Beside a headless cross of stone,
The libbards there shall lose the gree:
The raven shall come, the erne shall go,
And drink the Saxon bluid sae free.

† King Alexander III., killed by a fall from his horse, near Kinghorn.

† The uncertainty which long prevailed in Scotland concerning the fate of James IV. is well known.

‡ Bannockburn is the brook here meant.

The cross of stone they shall not know,
So thick the corses there shall be."—

"But tell me now," said brave Dunbar,
"True Thomas, tell now unto me,
What man shall rule the isle Britain,
Even from the north to the southern sea?"—

"A French Queen shall bear the son,
Shall rule all Britain to the sea;
He of the Bruce's blood shall come,
As near as in the ninth degree.

"The waters worship shall his race;
Likewise the waves of the farthest sea;
For they shall ride over ocean wide,
With hempen bridles, and horse of tree."

PART THIRD.—MODERN.

Thomas the Rhymer was renowned among his contemporaries as the author of the celebrated romance of *Sir Tristrem*. Of this once-admired poem only one copy is now known to exist, which is in the Advocates' Library. The Editor, in 1804, published a small edition of this curious work, which, if it does not revive the reputation of the bard of Ercildoune, is at least the earliest specimen of Scottish poetry hitherto published. Some account of this romance has already been given to the world in Mr. ELLIS'S *Specimens of Ancient Poetry*, vol. i. p. 165; iii. p. 410; a work to which our predecessors and our posterity are alike obliged—the former, for the preservation of the best-selected examples of their poetical taste; and the latter, for a history of the English language, which will only cease to be interesting with the existence of our mother-tongue, and all that genius and learning have recorded in it. It is sufficient here to mention, that so great was the reputation of the romance of *Sir Tristrem*, that few were thought capable of reciting it after the manner of the author.

The following attempt to commemorate the Rhymer's poetical fame. and the traditional account of his marvellous return to Fairy Land, being entirely modern, would have been placed with greater propriety among the class of Modern Ballads, had it not been for its immediate connection with the first and second parts of the same story.

WHEN seven years more were come and gone,
Was war through Scotland spread,
And Ruberslaw show'd high Dunyon†
His beacon blazing red.

Then all by bonny Coldingknow‡
Pitch'd palliouns took their room,
And crested helms, and spears a-rowe,
Glanced gaily through the broom.

The Leader, rolling to the Tweed,
Resounds the ensenzie;§
They roused the deer from Caddenhead,
To distant Torwoodlee.

The feast was spread in Ercildoune,
In Learmont's high and ancient hall:
And there were knights of great renown,
And ladies, laced in pall.

Nor lack'd they, while they sat at dine,
The music nor the tale,
Nor goblets of the blood-red wine,
Nor mantling quaighs‖ of ale.

True Thomas rose, with harp in hand,
When as the feast was done:
(In minstrel strife, in Fairy Land,
The elfin harp he won.)

Hush'd were the throng, both limb and tongue,
And harpers for envy pale;
And armed lords lean'd on their swords,
And hearken'd to the tale.

In numbers high, the witching tale
The prophet pour'd along;
No after bard might ere avail
Those numbers to prolong.

Yet fragments of the lofty strain
Float down the tide of years,
As, buoyant on the stormy main,
A parted wreck appears.

He sung King Arthur's Table Round:
The Warrior of the Lake;
How courteous Gawaine met the wound,
And bled for ladies' sake.

But chief, in gentle Tristrem's praise,
The notes melodious swell;
Was none excell'd in Arthur's days,
The knight of Lionelle.

For Marke, his cowardly uncle's right,
A venom'd wound he bore;
When fierce Morholde he slew in fight,
Upon the Irish shore.

No art the poison might withstand;
No medicine could be found,
Till lovely Isolde's lily hand
Had probed the rankling wound.

With gentle hand and soothing tongue
She bore the leech's part;
And while she o'er his sick-bed hung,
He paid her with his heart.

† Two hills above Jedburgh.
‡ An ancient tower near Ercildoune.
§ *Ensenzie*— War-cry, or gathering word.
‖ Quaighs—Wooden cups, composed of staves hooped together.

O fatal was the gift, I ween!
For, doom'd in evil tide,
The maid must be rude Cornwall's queen,
His cowardly uncle's bride.

Their loves, their woes, the gifted bard,
In fairy tissue wove;
Where lords, and knights, and ladies bright,
In gay confusion strove.

The Garde Joyeuse, amid the tale,
High rear'd its glittering head;
And Avalon's enchanted vale
In all its wonders spread.

Brangwain was there, and Segramore,
And fiend-born Merlin's gramarye;
Of that famed wizard's mighty lore,
O who could sing but he?

Through many a maze the winning song
In changeful passion led,
Till bent at length the listening throng
O'er Tristrem's dying bed.

His ancient wounds their scars expand,
With agony his heart is wrung:
O where is Isolde's lilye hand,
And where her soothing tongue?

She comes! she comes!—like flash of flame
Can lovers' footsteps fly:
She comes! she comes!—she only came
To see her Tristrem die.

She saw him die; her latest sigh
Join'd in a kiss his parting breath,
The gentlest pair that Britain bare,
United are in death.

There paused the harp: its lingering sound
Died slowly on the ear;
The silent guests still bent around,
For still they seem'd to hear.

Then woe broke forth in murmurs weak:
Nor ladies heaved alone the sigh;
But half-ashamed, the rugged cheek
Did many a gauntlet dry.

On Leader's stream and Learmont's tower,
The mists of evening close;
In camp, in castle, or in bower,
Each warrior sought repose.

Lord Douglas, in his lofty tent,
Dream'd o'er the woeful tale;
When footsteps light, across the bent,
The warrior's ears assail.

He starts, he wakes;—"What, Richard, ho!
Arise, my page, arise!
What venturous wight, at dead of night,
Dare step where Douglas lies?"—

Then forth they rush'd: by Leader's tide,
A selcouth† sight they see—
A hart and hind pace side by side,
As white as snow on Fairnalie.

Beneath the moon, with gesture proud,
They stately move and slow;
Nor scare they at the gathering crowd,
Who marvel as they go.

To Learmont's tower a message sped,
As fast as page might run;
And Thomas started from his bed,
And soon his clothes did on.

First he woxe pale, and then woxe red;
Never a word he spake but three;—
"My sand is run; my thread is spun;
This sign regardeth me."

The elfin harp his neck around,
In minstrel guise, he hung;
And on the wind, in doleful sound,
Its dying accents rung.

Then forth he went; yet turn'd him oft
To view his ancient hall:
On the grey tower, in lustre soft,
The autumn moonbeams fall;

And Leader's waves, like silver sheen,
Danced shimmering in the ray;
In deepening mass, at distance seen,
Broad Soltra's mountains lay.

"Farewell, my fathers' ancient tower!
A long farewell," said he:
"The scene of pleasure, pomp, or power,
Thou never more shalt be."

"To Learmont's name no foot of earth
Shall here again belong,
And, on thy hospitable hearth,
The hare shall leave her young.

"Adieu! adieu!" again he cried,
All as he turn'd him roun'—
"Farewell to Leader's silver tide!
Farewell to Ercildoune!"

The hart and hind approached the place,
As lingering yet he stood;
And there, before Lord Douglas' face,
With them he cross'd the flood.

Lord Douglas leap'd on his berry-brown steed,
And spurr'd him the Leader o'er;
But, though he rode with lightning speed,
He never saw them more.

Some said to hill, and some to glen,
Their wondrous course had been;
But ne'er in haunts of living men
Again was Thomas seen.

† Wondrous.

GLENFINLAS; OR, LORD RONALD'S CORONACH.†

THE simple tradition, upon which the following stanzas are founded, runs thus:—While two Highland hunters were passing the night in a solitary *bothy* (a hut, built for the purpose of hunting), and making merry over their venison and whisky, one of them expressed a wish that they had pretty lasses to complete their party. The words were scarcely uttered, when two beautiful young women, habited in green, entered the hut, dancing and singing. One of the hunters was seduced, by the siren who attached herself particularly to him, to leave the hut: the other remained, and, suspicious of the fair seducers, continued to play upon a trump, or Jew's harp, some strain, consecrated to the Virgin Mary. Day at length came, and the temptress vanished. Searching in the forest, he found the bones of his unfortunate friend, who had been torn to pieces and devoured by the fiend into whose toils he had fallen. The place was from thence called the Glen of the Green Women.

Glenfinlas is a tract of forest-ground, lying in the Highlands of Perthshire, not far from Callander in Menteith. It was formerly a royal forest, and now belongs to the Earl of Moray. This country, as well as the adjacent district of Balquidder, was, in times of yore, chiefly inhabited by the Macgregors. To the west of the forest of Glenfinlas lies Loch Katrine, and its romantic avenue, called the Trosachs. Benledi, Benmore, and Benvoirlich are mountains in the same district, and at no great distance from Glenfinlas. The river Teith passes Callander and the Castle of Doune, and joins the Forth near Stirling. The pass of Leny is immediately above Callander, and is the principal access to the Highlands from that town. Glenartney is a forest near Benvoirlich. The whole forms a sublime tract of Alpine scenery.

This ballad first appeared in the *Tales of Wonder*, by Lewis.

For them the viewless forms of air obey,
Their bidding heed, and at their beck repair;
They know what spirit brews the stormful day,
And heartless oft, like moody madness, stare,
To see the phantom-train their secret work prepare.—COLLINS.

"O HONE a rie'! O hone a rie'! ‡
The pride of Albin's line is o'er,
And fall'n Glenartney's stateliest tree;
We ne'er shall see Lord Ronald more!"—

O, sprung from great Macgillianore,
The chief that never fear'd a foe,
How matchless was thy broad claymore,
How deadly thine unerring bow!

Well can the Saxon widows tell, §
How, on the Teith's resounding shore,
The boldest Lowland warriors fell,
As down from Lenny's pass you bore.

But o'er his hills, in festal day,
How blazed Lord Ronald's beltane-tree,*
While youths and maids the light strathspey
So nimbly danced with Highland glee!

Cheer'd by the strength of Ronald's shell,
E'en age forgot his tresses hoar;
But now the loud lament we swell,
O ne'er to see Lord Ronald more!

From distant isles a chieftain came,
The joys of Ronald's halls to find,
And chase with him the dark-brown game,
That bounds o'er Albin's hills of wind.

'Twas Moy; whom in Columba's isle
The Seer's prophetic spirit found,*
As, with a minstrel's fire the while,
He waked his harp's harmonious sound.

Full many a spell to him was known,
Which wandering spirits shrink to hear;
And many a lay of potent tone,
Was never meant for mortal ear.

For there, 'tis said, in mystic mood,
High converse with the dead they hold,
And oft espy the fated shroud,
That shall the future corpse enfold.

O so it fell, that on a day,
To rouse the red deer from their den,
The Chiefs have ta'en their distant way,
And scour'd the deep Glenfinlas glen.

No vassals wait their sports to aid,
To watch their safety, deck their board;
Their simple dress the Highland plaid,
Their trusty guard the Highland sword.

Three summer days, thro' brake and dell,
Their whistling shafts successful flew;
And still, when dewy evening fell,
The quarry to their hut they drew.

† *Coronach* is the lamentation for a deceased warrior, sung by the aged of the clan.

‡ *O hone a rie'* signifies—"Alas for the prince or chief!"

§ The term Sassenach, or Saxon, is applied by the Highlanders to their Low-Country neighbours.

* An asterisk in these pages signifies that a note upon the passage is to be found at the end of the volume.

In grey Glenfinlas' deepest nook
The solitary cabin stood,
Fast by Moneira's sullen brook,
Which murmurs through that lonely wood.

Soft fell the night, the sky was calm,
When three successive days had flown;
And summer mist in dewy balm
Steep'd heathy bank and mossy stone.

The moon, half-hid in silvery flakes,
Afar her dubious radiance shed,
Quivering on Katrine's distant lakes,
And resting on Benledi's head.

Now in their hut, in social guise,
Their sylvan fare the Chiefs enjoy;
And pleasure laughs in Ronald's eyes,
As many a pledge he quaffs to Moy.

"What lack we here to crown our bliss,
While thus the pulse of joy beats high?
What, but fair woman's yielding kiss,
Her panting breath and melting eye?

"To chase the deer of yonder shades,
This morning left their father's pile
The fairest of our mountain maids,
The daughters of the proud Glengyle.

"Long have I sought sweet Mary's heart,
And dropp'd the tear, and heaved the sigh:
But vain the lover's wily art,
Beneath a sister's watchful eye.

"But thou mayst teach that guardian fair,
While far with Mary I am flown,
Of other hearts to cease her care,
And find it hard to guard her own.

"Touch but thy harp, thou soon shalt see
The lovely Flora of Glengyle,
Unmindful of her charge and me,
Hang on thy notes, 'twixt tear and smile.

"Or, if she choose a melting tale,
All underneath the greenwood bough,
Will good Saint Oran's rule prevail,*
Stern huntsman of the rigid brow?"—

"Since Enrick's fight, since Morna's death,
No more on me shall rapture rise,
Responsive to the panting breath,
Or yielding kiss, or melting eyes.

"E'en then, when o'er the heath of woe,
Where sunk my hopes of love and fame,
I bade my harp's wild wailings flow,
On me the Seer's sad spirit came.

"The last dread curse of angry heaven,
With ghastly sights and sounds of woe,
To dash each glimpse of joy was given—
The gift, the future ill to know.

"The bark thou saw'st, yon summer morn,
So gaily part from Oban's bay,
My eye beheld her dash'd and torn,
Far on the rocky Colonsay.

"Thy Fergus too—thy sister's son,
Thou saw'st, with pride, the gallant's power,
As, marching 'gainst the Lord of Downe,
He left the skirts of huge Benmore.

"Thou only saw'st their tartans† wave,
As down Benvoirlich's side they wound,
Heard'st but the pibroch,‡ answering brave
To many a target clanking round.

"I heard the groans, I mark'd the tears,
I saw the wound his bosom bore,
When on the serried Saxon spears
He pour'd his clan's resistless roar.

"And thou, who bidst me think of bliss,
And bidst my heart awake to glee,
And court, like thee, the wanton kiss—
That heart, O Ronald, bleeds for thee!

"I see the death-damps chill thy brow;
I hear thy Warning Spirit cry;
The corpse-lights dance—they're gone, and now. . . .
No more is given to gifted eye!"——

"Alone enjoy thy dreary dreams,
Sad prophet of the evil hour!
Say, should we scorn joy's transient beams,
Because to-morrow's storm may lour?

"Or false, or sooth, thy words of woe,
Clangillian's Chieftain ne'er shall fear;
His blood shall bound at rapture's glow,
Though doom'd to stain the Saxon spear.

"E'en now, to meet me in yon dell,
My Mary's buskins brush the dew."
He spoke, nor bade the Chief farewell,
But call'd his dogs, and gay withdrew.

Within an hour return'd each hound;
In rush'd the rousers of the deer;
They howl'd in melancholy sound,
Then closely couch'd beside the Seer.

No Ronald yet; though midnight came,
And sad were Moy's prophetic dreams,
As, bending o'er the dying flame,
He fed the watch-fire's quivering gleams.

Sudden the hounds erect their ears,
And sudden cease their moaning howl;
Close press'd to Moy, they mark their fears
By shivering limbs and stifled growl.

† *Tartans*—The full Highland dress, made of the chequered stuff so termed.

‡ *Pibroch*—A piece of martial music, adapted to the Highland bagpipe.

Untouch'd, the harp began to ring,
As softly, slowly, oped the door;
And shook responsive every string,
As light a footstep press'd the floor.

And by the watch-fire's glimmering light,
Close by the minstrel's side was seen
A huntress maid, in beauty bright,
All dropping wet her robes of green.

All dropping wet her garments seem;
Chill'd was her cheek, her bosom bare,
As, bending o'er the dying gleam,
She wrung the moisture from her hair.

With maiden blush, she softly said,
"O gentle huntsman, hast thou seen,
In deep Glenfinlas' moonlight glade,
A lovely maid in vest of green:

"With her a Chief in Highland pride;
His shoulders bear the hunter's bow,
The mountain dirk adorns his side,
Far on the wind his tartans flow?"—

"And who art thou? and who are they?"
All ghastly gazing, Moy replied:
"And why, beneath the moon's pale ray,
Dare ye thus roam Glenfinlas' side?"—

"Where wild Loch Katrine pours her tide,
Blue, dark, and deep, round many an isle,
Our father's towers o'erhang her side,
The castle of the bold Glengyle.

"To chase the dun Glenfinlas deer,
Our woodland course this morn we bore,
And haply met, while wandering here,
The son of great Macgillianore.

"O aid me, then, to seek the pair,
Whom, loitering in the woods, I lost;
Alone, I dare not venture there,
Where walks, they say, the shrieking ghost."—

"Yes, many a shrieking ghost walks there;
Then, first, my own sad vow to keep,
Here will I pour my midnight prayer,
Which still must rise when mortals sleep."—

"O first, for pity's gentle sake,
Guide a lone wanderer on her way!
For I must cross the haunted brake,
And reach my father's towers ere day."—

"First, three times tell each Ave-bead,
And thrice a Pater-noster say;
Then kiss with me the holy rede;
So shall we safely wend our way."—

"O shame to knighthood, strange and foul!
Go, doff the bonnet from thy brow,
And shroud thee in the monkish cowl,
Which best befits thy sullen vow.

"Not so, by high Dunlathmon's fire,
Thy heart was froze to love and joy,
When gaily rung thy raptured lyre
To wanton Morna's melting eye."

Wild stared the minstrel's eyes of flame,
And high his sable locks arose,
And quick his colour went and came,
As fear and rage alternate rose.

"And thou! when by the blazing oak
I lay, to her and love resign'd,
Say, rode ye on the eddying smoke,
Or sail'd ye on the midnight wind?

"Not thine a race of mortal blood,
Nor old Glengyle's pretended line;
Thy dame, the Lady of the Flood—
Thy sire, the Monarch of the Mine."

He mutter'd thrice Saint Oran's rhyme,
And thrice Saint Fillan's powerful prayer;
Then turn'd him to the eastern clime,
And sternly shook his coal-black hair.

And, bending o'er his harp, he flung
His wildest witch-notes on the wind;
And loud, and high, and strange, they rung,
As many a magic change they find.

Tall wax'd the Spirit's altering form,
Till to the roof her stature grew;
Then, mingling with the rising storm,
With one wild yell away she flew.

Rain beats, hail rattles, whirlwinds tear:
The slender hut in fragments flew;
But not a lock of Moy's loose hair
Was waved by wind, or wet by dew.

Wild mingling with the howling gale,
Loud bursts of ghastly laughter rise;
High o'er the minstrel's head they sail,
And die amid the northern skies.

The voice of thunder shook the wood,
As ceased the more than mortal yell;
And, spattering foul, a shower of blood
Upon the hissing firebrands fell.

Next dropp'd from high a mangled arm;
The fingers strain'd a half-drawn blade:
And last, the life-blood streaming warm,
Torn from the trunk, a gasping head.

Oft o'er that head, in battling field,
Stream'd the proud crest of high Benmore;
That arm the broad claymore could wield,
Which dyed the Teith with Saxon gore.

Woe to Moneira's sullen rills!
Woe to Glenfinlas' dreary glen!
There never son of Albin's hills
Shall draw the hunter's shaft agen.

E'en the tired pilgrim's burning feet
At noon shall shun that sheltering den,
Lest, journeying in their rage, he meet
The wayward Ladies of the Glen.

And we—behind the Chieftain's shield,
No more shall we in safety dwell;
None leads the people to the field—
And we the loud lament must swell.

O hone a rie' ! O hone a rie' !
The pride of Albin's line is o'er !
And fall'n Glenartney's stateliest tree;
We ne'er shall see Lord Ronald more !

THE EVE OF ST. JOHN.

SMAYLHO'ME or Smallholm Tower, the scene of the following ballad, is situated on the northern boundary of Roxburghshire, among a cluster of wild rocks, called Sandiknow-Crags, the property of Hugh Scott, Esq., of Harden [Lord Polwarth]. The tower is a high square building, surrounded by an outer wall, now ruinous. The circuit of the outer court, being defended on three sides by a precipice and morass, is accessible only from the west by a steep and rocky path. The apartments, as is usual in a Border keep, or fortress, are placed one above another, and communicate by a narrow stair; on the roof are two bartizans, or platforms, for defence or pleasure. The inner door of the tower is wood, the outer an iron gate; the distance between them being nine feet, the thickness, namely, of the wall. From the elevated situation of Smaylho'me Tower, it is seen many miles in every direction. Among the crags by which it is surrounded, one, more eminent, is called the *Watchfold*, and is said to have been the station of a beacon, in the times of war with England. Without the tower-court is a ruined chapel. Brotherstone is a heath in the neighbourhood of Smaylho'me Tower.

This ballad was first printed in Mr. LEWIS'S *Tales of Wonder*. It is here published, with some additional illustrations, particularly an account of the battle of Ancram Moor, which seemed proper in a work upon Border antiquities. The catastrophe of the tale is founded upon a well-known Irish tradition. This ancient fortress and its vicinity formed the scene of the Editor's infancy, and seemed to claim from him this attempt to celebrate them in a Border tale.

THE Baron of Smaylho'me rose with day,
He spurr'd his courser on,
Without stop or stay, down the rocky way,
That leads to Brotherstone.

He went not with the bold Buccleuch,
His banner broad to rear;
He went not 'gainst the English yew,
To lift the Scottish spear.

Yet his plate-jack† was braced, and his helmet was laced,
And his vaunt-brace of proof he wore;
At his saddle-gerthe was a good steel sperthe,
Full ten pound weight and more.

The Baron return'd in three days' space,
And his looks were sad and sour;
And weary was his courser's pace,
As he reach'd his rocky tower.

He came not from where Ancram Moor
Ran red with English blood;
Where the Douglas true, and the bold Buccleuch,
'Gainst keen Lord Evers stood.

Yet was his helmet hack'd and hew'd,
His acton pierced and tore,
His axe and his dagger with blood im-brued,—
But it was not English gore.

He lighted at the Chapellage,
He held him close and still;
And he whistled thrice for his little foot-page,
His name was English Will.

"Come thou hither, my little foot-page,
Come hither to my knee;
Though thou art young, and tender of age,
I think thou art true to me.

"Come, tell me all that thou hast seen,
And look thou tell me true!
Since I from Smaylho'me tower have been,
What did thy lady do?"—

"My lady, each night, sought the lonely light,
That burns on the wild Watchfold;
For, from height to height, the beacons bright
Of the English foemen told.

"The bittern clamour'd from the moss,
The wind blew loud and shrill;
Yet the craggy pathway she did cross
To the eiry Beacon Hill.

"I watched her steps, and silent came
Where she sat her on a stone;—
No watchman stood by the dreary flame,
It burned all alone.

"The second night I kept her in sight,
Till to the fire she came,
And, by Mary's might! an Armèd Knight
Stood by the lonely flame.

† The plate-jack is coat-armour; the vaunt-brace, or wam-brace, armour for the body; the sperthe, a battle-axe.

"And many a word that warlike lord
Did speak to my lady there;
But the rain fell fast, and loud blew the blast,
And I heard not what they were.

"The third night there the sky was fair,
And the mountain-blast was still,
As again I watched the secret pair,
On the lonesome Beacon Hill.

"And I heard her name the midnight hour,
And name this holy eve;
And say, 'Come this night to thy lady's bower;
Ask no bold Baron's leave.

"'He lifts his spear with the bold Buccleuch;
His lady is all alone;
The door she'll undo, to her knight so true,
On the eve of good St. John.'—

"'I cannot come; I must not come;
I dare not come to thee;
On the eve of St. John I must wander alone:
In thy bower I may not be.'—

"'Now, out on thee, fainthearted knight!
Thou shouldst not say me nay;
For the eve is sweet, and when lovers meet,
Is worth the whole summer's day.

"'And I'll chain the blood-hound, and the warder shall not sound,
And rushes shall be strewed on the stair;
So, by the black-rood stone,† and by holy St. John,
I conjure thee, my love, to be there!'—

"'Though the blood-hound be mute, and the rush beneath my foot,
And the warder his bugle should not blow,
Yet there sleepeth a priest in a chamber to the east,
And my footstep he would know.'—

"'O fear not the priest, who sleepeth to the east,
For to Dryburgh‡ the way he has ta'en;
And there to say mass, till three days do pass,
For the soul of a knight that is slayne.'—

"He turn'd him around, and grimly he frown'd;
Then he laugh'd right scornfully—
'He who says the mass-rite for the soul of that knight,
May as well say mass for me:

"'At the lone midnight hour, when bad spirits have power,
In thy chamber will I be.'
With that he was gone, and my lady left alone,
And no more did I see."

Then changed, I trow, was that bold Baron's brow,
From the dark to the blood-red high;
"Now, tell me the mien of the knight thou hast seen,
For, by Mary, he shall die!"—

"His arms shone full bright, in the beacon's red light;
His plume it was scarlet and blue;
On his shield was a hound, in a silver leash bound,
And his crest was a branch of the yew."—

"Thou liest, thou liest, thou little foot-page,
Loud dost thou lie to me!
For that knight is cold, and laid low in the mould,
All under the Eildon Tree."†—

"Yet hear but my word, my noble lord!
For I heard her name his name;
And that lady bright, she called the knight
Sir Richard of Coldinghame."—

The bold Baron's brow then changed, I trow,
From high blood-red to pale—
"The grave is deep and dark—and the corpse is stiff and stark—
So I may not trust thy tale.

"Where fair Tweed flows round holy Melrose,
And Eildon slopes to the plain,
Full three nights ago, by some secret foe,
That gay gallant was slain.

"The varying light deceived thy sight,
And the wild winds drown'd the name;
For the Dryburgh bells ring, and the white monks do sing,
For Sir Richard of Coldinghame!"

He pass'd the court-gate, and he oped the tower-gate,
And he mounted the narrow stair,
To the bartizan-seat, where, with maids that on her wait,
He found his lady fair.

That lady sat in mournful mood;
Look'd over hill and vale;
Over Tweed's fair flood, and Mertoun's wood,
And all down Teviotdale.

† The black-rood of Melrose was a crucifix of black marble, and of peculiar sanctity.

‡ Dryburgh Abbey is situated on the banks of the Tweed. After its dissolution, it became the property of the Halliburtons of Newmains, and is now the seat of the Right Hon. the Earl of Buchan.

† Eildon is a high hill, terminating in three conical summits, immediately above the town of Melrose, where are the admired ruins of a magnificent monastery. Eildon Tree is said to be the spot where Thomas the Rhymer uttered his prophecies.

"Now hail, now hail, thou lady bright!"—
"Now hail, thou Baron true! [fight?
What news, what news, from Ancram
What news from the bold Buccleuch?"—

"The Ancram moor is red with gore,
For many a Southron fell;
And Buccleuch has charged us, evermore,
To watch our beacons well."—

The lady blush'd red, but nothing she said:
Nor added the Baron a word:
Then she stepp'd down the stair to her
chamber fair,
And so did her moody lord.

In sleep the lady mourn'd, and the Baron
toss'd and turn'd,
And oft to himself he said,—
"The worms around him creep, and his
bloody grave is deep . . . . .
It cannot give up the dead!"—

It was near the ringing of matin-bell,
The night was well-nigh done,
When a heavy sleep on that Baron fell,
On the eve of good St. John.

The lady look'd through the chamber
By the light of a dying flame; [fair,
And she was aware of a knight stood there—
Sir Richard of Coldinghame!

"Alas! away, away!" she cried,
"For the holy Virgin's sake!"—
"Lady, I know who sleeps by thy side;
But, lady, he will not awake.

"By Eildon Tree, for long nights three,
In bloody grave have I lain;
The mass and the death-prayer are said
But, lady, they are said in vain. [for me,

"By the Baron's brand, near Tweed's fair
strand,
Most foully slain, I fell;
And my restless sprite on the beacon's
height,
For a space is doom'd to dwell.

"At our trysting-place,† for a certain
space,
I must wander to and fro; [bower
But I had not had power to come to thy
Hadst thou not conjured me so."—

Love master'd fear—her brow she cross'd;
"How, Richard, hast thou sped?
And art thou saved, or art thou lost?"—
The vision shook his head!

"Who spilleth life, shall forfeit life;
So bid thy lord believe:
That lawless love is guilt above,
This awful sign receive."

He laid his left palm on an oaken beam;
His right upon her hand;
The lady shrunk, and fainting sunk,
For it scorch'd like a fiery brand.

The sable score, of fingers four,
Remains on that board impress'd;
And for evermore that lady wore
A covering on her wrist.

There is a nun in Dryburgh bower,‡
Ne'er looks upon the sun;
There is a monk in Melrose tower,
He speaketh word to none.

That nun, who ne'er beholds the day,
That monk, who speaks to none—
That nun was Smaylho'me's Lady gay,
That monk the bold Baron.

CADYOW CASTLE.

The ruins of Cadyow, or Cadzow Castle, the ancient baronial residence of the family of Hamilton, are situated upon the precipitous banks of the river Evan, about two miles above its junction with the Clyde. It was dismantled, in the conclusion of the Civil Wars, during the reign of the unfortunate Mary, to whose cause the house of Hamilton devoted themselves with a generous zeal, which occasioned their temporary obscurity, and very nearly their total ruin. The situation of the ruins, embosomed in wood, darkened by ivy and creeping shrubs, and over-hanging the brawling torrent, is romantic in the highest degree. In the immediate vicinity of Cadyow is a grove of immense oaks, the remains of the Caledonian Forest, which anciently extended through the South of Scotland, from the eastern to the Atlantic Ocean. Some of these trees measure twenty-five feet, and upwards, in circumference; and the state of decay in which they now appear shows that they have witnessed the rites of the Druids. The whole scenery is included in the magnificent and extensive park of the Duke of Hamilton. There was long preserved in this forest the breed of the Scottish wild cattle, until their ferocity occasioned their being extirpated, about forty years ago. Their appearance was beautiful, being milk-white, with black muzzles, horns, and hoofs. The bulls are described by ancient authors as having white manes; but those of latter days had lost that peculiarity, perhaps by intermixture with the tame breed.‡

† *Trysting-place*—Place of rendezvous.

‡ They were formerly kept in the park of Drumlanrig, and are still to be seen at Chillingham Castle, in Northumberland.

In detailing the death of the Regent Murray, which is made the subject of the following ballad, it would be injustice to my reader to use other words than those of Dr. Robertson, whose account of that memorable event forms a beautiful piece of historical painting :—

"Hamilton of Bothwellhaugh was the person who committed this barbarous action. He had been condemned to death soon after the battle of Langside, as we have already related, and owed his life to the Regent's clemency. But part of his estate had been bestowed upon one of the Regent's favourites,† who seized his house, and turned out his wife, naked, in a cold night, into the open fields, where, before next morning, she became furiously mad. This injury made a deeper impression on him than the benefit he had received, and from that moment he vowed to be revenged of the Regent. Party rage strengthened and inflamed his private resentment. His kinsmen, the Hamiltons, applauded the enterprise. The maxims of that age justified the most desperate course he could take to obtain vengeance. He followed the Regent for some time, and watched for an opportunity to strike the blow. He resolved at last to wait till his enemy should arrive at Linlithgow, through which he was to pass in his way from Stirling to Edinburgh. He took his stand in a wooden gallery,‡ which had a window towards the street ; spread a feather-bed on the floor, to hinder the noise of his feet from being heard ; hung up a black cloth behind him, that his shadow might not be observed from without ; and, after all this preparation, calmly expected the Regent's approach, who had lodged during the night in a house not far distant. Some indistinct information of the danger which threatened him had been conveyed to the Regent, and he paid so much regard to it, that he resolved to return by the same gate through which he had entered, and to fetch a compass round the town. But, as the crowd about the gate was great, and he himself unacquainted with fear, he proceeded directly along the street ; and the throng of people obliging him to move very slowly, gave the assassin time to take so true an aim, that he shot him, with a single bullet, through the lower part of his belly, and killed the horse of a gentleman who rode on his other side. His followers instantly endeavoured to break into the house whence the blow had come ; but they found the door strongly barricadoed, and before it could be forced open, Hamilton had mounted a fleet horse,§ which stood ready for him at a back passage, and was got far beyond their reach. The Regent died the same night of his wound."—*History of Scotland*, book v.

Bothwellhaugh rode straight to Hamilton, where he was received in triumph ; for the ashes of the houses in Clydesdale, which had been burned by Murray's army, were yet smoking ; and party prejudice, the habits of the age, and the enormity of the provocation, seemed to his kinsmen to justify the deed. After a short abode at Hamilton, this fierce and determined man left Scotland and served in France, under the patronage of the family of Guise, to whom he was doubtless recommended by having avenged the cause of their niece, Queen Mary, upon her ungrateful brother. De Thou has recorded that an attempt was made to engage him to assassinate Gaspar de Coligni, the famous Admiral of France, and the buckler of the Huguenot cause. But the character of Bothwellhaugh was mistaken. He was no mercenary trader in blood, and rejected the offer with contempt and indignation. He had no authority, he said, from Scotland to commit murders in France ; he had avenged his own just quarrel, but he would neither for price nor prayer avenge that of another man.—*Thuanus*, cap. 46.

The Regent's death happened 23rd January, 1569. It is applauded or stigmatised, by contemporary historians, according to their religious or party prejudices. The triumph of Blackwood is unbounded. He not only extols the pious feat of Bothwellhaugh, "who," he observes, "satisfied, with a single ounce of lead, him whose sacrilegious avarice had stripped the metropolitan church of St. Andrews of its covering ;" but he ascribes it to immediate divine inspiration, and the escape of Hamilton to little less than the miraculous interference of the Deity.—Jebb, vol. ii. p. 263. With equal injustice, it was, by others, made the ground of a general national reflection ; for, when Mather urged Berney to assassinate Burleigh, and quoted the examples of Poltrot and Bothwellhaugh, the other conspirator answered, "that neyther Poltrot nor Hambleton did attempt their enterpryse without some reason or consideration to lead them to it ; as the one, by hyre, and promise of preferment or rewarde ; the other, upon desperate mind of revenge, for a lyttle wrong done unto him, as the report goethe, according to the vyle trayterous dysposysyon of the hoole natyon of the Scottes."—Murdin's *State Papers*, vol. i. p. 197.

Addressed to the Right Honourable Lady Anne Hamilton.

When princely Hamilton's abode
Ennobled Cadyow's Gothic towers,
The song went round, the goblet flow'd,
And revel sped the laughing hours.

Then, thrilling to the harp's gay sound,
So sweetly rung each vaulted wall,
And echoed light the dancer's bound,
As mirth and music cheer'd the hall.

† This was Sir James Bellenden, Lord Justice-Clerk, whose shameful and inhuman rapacity occasioned the catastrophe in the text.—Spottiswoode.

‡ The house to which this projecting gallery was attached was the property of the Archbishop of St. Andrews, a natural brother of the Duke of Chatelherault, and uncle to Bothwellhaugh. This, among many other circumstances, seems to evince the aid which Bothwellhaugh received from his clan in effecting his purpose.

§ The gift of Lord John Hamilton, Commendator of Arbroath.

But Cadyow's towers, in ruins laid,
And vaults, by ivy mantled o'er,
Thrill to the music of the shade,
Or echo Evan's hoarser roar.

Yet still, of Cadyow's faded fame,
You bid me tell a minstrel tale,
And tune my harp, of Border frame,
On the wild banks of Evandale.

For thou, from scenes of courtly pride,
From pleasure's lighter scenes, canst
To draw oblivion's pall aside, [turn,
And mark the long-forgotten urn.

Then, noble maid! at thy command,
Again the crumbled halls shall rise;
Lo! as on Evan's banks we stand,
The past returns—the present flies.

Where, with the rock's wood-cover'd side,
Were blended late the ruins green,
Rise turrets in fantastic pride,
And feudal banners flaunt between:

Where the rude torrent's brawling course
Was shagg'd with thorn and tangling
The ashlar buttress braves its force, [sloe,
And ramparts frown in battled row.

'Tis night—the shade of keep and spire
Obscurely dance on Evan's stream;
And on the wave the warder's fire
Is chequering the moonlight beam.

Fades slow their light; the east is grey;
The weary warder leaves his tower;
Steeds snort, uncoupled stag-hounds bay,
And merry hunters quit the bower.

The drawbridge falls—they hurry out—
Clatters each plank and swinging chain,
As, dashing o'er, the jovial rout
Urge the shy steed, and slack the rein.

First of his troop, the Chief rode on;†
His shouting merry-men throng behind;
The steed of princely Hamilton
Was fleeter than the mountain wind.

From the thick copse the roebucks bound,
The startled red-deer scuds the plain,
For the hoarse bugle's warrior-sound
Has roused their mountain haunts again.

Through the huge oaks of Evandale, [worn,
Whose limbs a thousand years have
What sullen roar comes down the gale,
And drowns the hunter's pealing horn?

Mightiest of all the beasts of chase,
That roam in woody Caledon,
Crashing the forest in his race, [on.*
The Mountain Bull comes thundering

Fierce, on the hunter's quiver'd band,
He rolls his eyes of swarthy glow,
Spurns, with black hoof and horn, the sand,
And tosses high his mane of snow.

Aim'd well, the Chieftain's lance has flown;
Struggling in blood the savage lies;
His roar is sunk in hollow groan—
Sound, merry huntsmen! sound the *pryse!*†

'Tis noon—against the knotted oak
The hunters rest the idle spear;
Curls through the trees the slender smoke,
Where yeomen dight the woodland cheer.

Proudly the Chieftain mark'd his clan,
On greenwood lap all careless thrown,
Yet miss'd his eye the boldest man
That bore the name of Hamilton.

"Why fills not Bothwellhaugh his place,
Still wont our weal and woe to share?
Why comes he not our sport to grace?
Why shares he not our hunter's fare?"—

Stern Claud replied,* with darkening face
(Grey Paisley's haughty lord was he),
"At merry feast, or buxom chase,
No more the warrior wilt thou see.

"Few suns have set since Woodhouselee*
Saw Bothwellhaugh's bright goblets
When to his hearths, in social glee, [foam,
The warworn soldier turn'd him home.

"There, wan from her maternal throes,
His Margaret, beautiful and mild,
Sate in her bower, a pallid rose,
And peaceful nursed her new-born child.

"O change accursed! past are those days;
False Murray's ruthless spoilers came,
And, for the hearth's domestic blaze,
Ascends destruction's volumed flame.

"What sheeted phantom wanders wild,
Where mountain Eske through wood-
land flows,
Her arms enfold a shadowy child—
Oh! is it she, the pallid rose?

"The wilder'd traveller sees her glide,
And hears her feeble voice with awe—
'Revenge,' she cries, 'on Murray's pride!
And woe for injured Bothwellhaugh!'"

† The head of the family of Hamilton, at this period, was James, Earl of Arran, Duke of Chatelherault, in France, and first peer of the Scottish realm. In 1569 he was appointed by Queen Mary her lieutenant-general in Scotland, under the singular title of her adopted father.

† *Pryse*—the note blown at the death of the game.

He ceased—and cries of rage and grief
Burst mingling from the kindred band,
And half arose the kindling Chief,
And half unsheathed his Arran brand.

But who, o'er bush, o'er stream and rock,
Rides headlong, with resistless speed,
Whose bloody poniard's frantic stroke
Drives to the leap his jaded steed;*

Whose cheek is pale, whose eyeballs glare,
As one some vision'd sight that saw,
Whose hands are bloody, loose his hair?—
'Tis he! 'tis he! 'tis Bothwellhaugh.

From gory selle,† and reeling steed,
Sprung the fierce horseman with a bound,
And, reeking from the recent deed,
He dash'd his carbine on the ground.

Sternly he spoke—"'Tis sweet to hear
In good greenwood the bugle blown,
But sweeter to Revenge's ear,
To drink a tyrant's dying groan.

"Your slaughter'd quarry proudly trode,
At dawning morn, o'er dale and down,
But prouder base-born Murray rode
Through old Linlithgow's crowded town.

"From the wild Border's humbled side,*
In haughty triumph marchèd he,
While Knox relax'd his bigot pride,
And smiled, the traitorous pomp to see.

"But can stern Power, with all his vaunt,
Or Pomp, with all her courtly glare,
The settled heart of Vengeance daunt,
Or change the purpose of despair?

"With hackbut bent,* my secret stand,
Dark as the purposed deed, I chose,
And mark'd, where, mingling in his band,
Troop'd Scottish pikes and English bows.

"Dark Morton,‡ girt with many a spear,
Murder's foul minion, led the van;
And clash'd their broadswords in the rear
The wild Macfarlane's plaided clan.*

"Glencairn and stout Parkhead* were
Obsequious at their Regent's rein, [nigh,
And haggard Lindesay's iron eye,
That saw fair Mary weep in vain.*

"'Mid pennon'd spears, a steely grove,
Proud Murray's plumage floated high;
Scarce could his trampling charger move,
So close the minions crowded nigh.*

"From the raised vizor's shade, his eye,
Dark-rolling, glanced the ranks along,
And his steel truncheon, waved on high,
Seem'd marshalling the iron throng.

"But yet his saddened brow confess'd
A passing shade of doubt and awe;
Some fiend was whispering in his breast,
'Beware of injured Bothwellhaugh!'

"The death-shot parts — the charger springs—
Wild rises tumult's startling roar!
And Murray's plumy helmet rings—
—Rings on the ground, to rise no more.

"What joy the raptured youth can feel,
To hear her love the loved one tell—
Or he, who broaches on his steel
The wolf, by whom his infant fell!

"But dearer to my injured eye
To see in dust proud Murray roll;
And mine was ten times trebled joy,
To hear him groan his felon soul.

"My Margaret's spectre glided near;
With pride her bleeding victim saw;
And shriek'd in his death-deafen'd ear,
'Remember injured Bothwellhaugh!'

"Then speed thee, noble Chatlerault!
Spread to the wind thy banner'd tree!†
Each warrior bend his Clydesdale bow!—
Murray is fall'n, and Scotland free!"

Vaults every warrior to his steed;
Loud bugles join their wild acclaim—
"Murray is fall'n, and Scotland freed!
Couch, Arran! couch thy spear of flame!"

But, see! the minstrel vision fails—
The glimmering spears are seen no more;
The shouts of war die on the gales,
Or sink in Evan's lonely roar.

For the loud bugle, pealing high,
The blackbird whistles down the vale,
And sunk in ivied ruins lie
The banner'd towers of Evandale.

For Chiefs, intent on bloody deed,
And Vengeance shouting o'er the slain,
Lo! high-born Beauty rules the steed,
Or graceful guides the silken rein.

And long may Peace and Pleasure own
The maids who list the minstrel's tale;
Nor e'er a ruder guest be known
On the fair banks of Evandale!

† *Selle*—saddle. A word used by Spenser, and other ancient authors.

‡ Of this noted person, it is enough to say, that he was active in the murder of David Rizzio, and at least privy to that of Darnley.

† An oak, half-sawn, with the motto *through*, is an ancient cognizance of the family of Hamilton.

THE GRAY BROTHER.

A FRAGMENT.

THE imperfect state of this ballad, which was written several years ago, is not a circumstance affected for the purpose of giving it that peculiar interest which is often found to arise from ungratified curiosity. On the contrary, it was the Editor's intention to have completed the tale, if he had found himself able to succeed to his own satisfaction. Yielding to the opinion of persons whose judgment, if not biassed by the partiality of friendship, is entitled to deference, he has preferred inserting these verses as a fragment, to his intention of entirely suppressing them.

The tradition upon which the tale is founded, regards a house upon the barony of Gilmerton, near Lasswade, in Mid-Lothian. This building, now called Gilmerton Grange, was originally named Burndale, from the following tragic adventure. The barony of Gilmerton belonged of yore to a gentleman named Heron, who had one beautiful daughter. This young lady was seduced by the Abbot of Newbattle, a richly endowed abbey upon the banks of the South Esk, now a seat of the Marquis of Lothian. Heron came to the knowledge of this circumstance, and learned also that the lovers carried on their guilty intercourse by the connivance of the lady's nurse, who lived at this house of Gilmerton Grange, or Burndale. He formed a resolution of bloody vengeance, undeterred by the supposed sanctity of the clerical character, or by the stronger claims of natural affection. Choosing, therefore, a dark and windy night, when the objects of his vengeance were engaged in a stolen interview, he set fire to a stack of dried thorns, and other combustibles, which he had caused to be piled against the house, and reduced to a pile of glowing ashes the dwelling, with all its inmates.

The scene with which the ballad opens was suggested by the following curious passage, extracted from the Life of Alexander Peden, one of the wandering and persecuted teachers of the sect of Cameronians, during the reign of Charles II. and his successor, James. This person was supposed by his followers, and perhaps really believed himself, to be possessed of supernatural gifts; for the wild scenes which they frequented, and the constant dangers which were incurred through their proscription, deepened upon their minds the gloom of superstition, so general in that age.

"About the same time he [Peden] came to Andrew Normand's house, in the parish of Alloway, in the shire of Ayr, being to preach at night in his barn. After he came in, he halted a little, leaning upon a chair-back, with his face covered; when he lifted up his head, he said, 'They are in this house that I have not one word of salvation unto;' he halted a little again, saying, 'This is strange, that the devil will not go out, that we may begin our work!' Then there was a woman went out, ill-looked upon almost all her life, and to her dying hour, for a witch, with many presumptions of the same. It escaped me, in the former passages, what John Muirhead (whom I have often mentioned) told me, that when he came from Ireland to Galloway, he was at family worship, and giving some notes upon the Scripture read, when a very ill-looking man came, and sat down within the door, at the back of the *hallan* [partition of the cottage]: immediately he halted and said, 'There is some unhappy body just now come into this house. I charge him to go out, and not stop my mouth!' This person went out, and he *insisted* [went on], yet he saw him neither come in nor go out."—*The Life and Prophecies of Mr. Alexander Peden, late Minister of the Gospel at New Glenluce, in Galloway*, part ii. § 26.

THE Pope he was saying the high, high mass,
All on Saint Peter's day,
With the power to him given, by the saints in heaven,
To wash men's sins away.

The Pope he was saying the blessed mass,
And the people kneel'd around,
And from each man's soul his sins did pass,
As he kiss'd the holy ground.

And all, among the crowded throng,
Was still both limb and tongue,
While, through vaulted roof and aisles aloof,
The holy accents rung.

At the holiest word he quiver'd for fear,
And falter'd in the sound—
And, when he would the chalice rear,
He dropp'd it to the ground.

"The breath of one of evil deed
Pollutes our sacred day;
He has no portion in our creed,
No part in what I say.

"A being, whom no blessed word
To ghostly peace can bring;
A wretch, at whose approach abhorr'd,
Recoils each holy thing.

"Up, up, unhappy! haste, arise!
My adjuration fear!
I charge thee not to stop my voice,
Nor longer tarry here!"

Amid them all a pilgrim kneel'd,
In gown of sackcloth grey;
Far journeying from his native field,
He first saw Rome that day.

For forty days and nights so drear,
I ween he had not spoke,
And, save with bread and water clear,
His fast he ne'er had broke.

Amid the penitential flock,
Seem'd none more bent to pray;
But, when the Holy Father spoke,
He rose and went his way.

Again unto his native land
His weary course he drew,
To Lothian's fair and fertile strand,
And Pentland's mountains blue.

His unblest feet his native seat,
'Mid Eske's fair woods, regain; [sweet
Through woods more fair no stream more
Rolls to the eastern main.

And lords to meet the pilgrim came,
And vassals bent the knee;
For all 'mid Scotland's chiefs of fame,
Was none more famed than he.

And boldly for his country, still,
In battle he had stood,
Ay, even when on the banks of Till
Her noblest pour'd their blood.

Sweet are the paths, O passing sweet!
By Eske's fair streams that run,
O'er airy steep, through copsewood deep,
Impervious to the sun.

There the rapt poet's step may rove,
And yield the muse the day;
There Beauty, led by timid Love,
May shun the tell-tale ray;

From that fair dome, where suit is paid,
By blast of bugle free,*
To Auchendinny's hazel glade,*
And haunted Woodhouselee.

Who knows not Melville's beechy grove,*
And Roslin's rocky glen,*
Dalkeith, which all the virtues love,*
And classic Hawthornden?*

Yet never a path, from day to day,
The pilgrim's footsteps range,
Save but the solitary way
To Burndale's ruin'd grange.

A woeful place was that, I ween,
As sorrow could desire; [wall,
For nodding to the fall was each crumbling
And the roof was scathed with fire.

It fell upon a summer's eve,
While, on Carnethy's head, [beams
The last faint gleams of the sun's low
Had streak'd the grey with red;

And the convent bell did vespers tell,
Newbattle's oaks among,
And mingled with the solemn knell
Our Ladye's evening song:

The heavy knell, the choir's faint swell,
Came slowly down the wind,
And on the pilgrim's ear they fell,
As his wonted path he did find.

Deep sunk in thought, I ween, he was,
Nor ever raised his eye,
Until he came to that dreary place,
Which did all in ruins lie.

He gazed on the walls, so scathed with fire,
With many a bitter groan—
And there was aware of a Gray Friar,
Resting him on a stone.

"Now, Christ save thee!" said the Gray Brother;
"Some pilgrim thou seemest to be."
But in sore amaze did Lord Albert gaze,
Nor answer again made he.

"O come ye from east, or come ye from west,
Or bring reliques from over the sea;
Or come ye from the shrine of St. James the divine,
Or St. John of Beverley?"—

"I come not from the shrine of St. James the divine,
Nor bring reliques from over the sea;
I bring but a curse from our father, the Pope,
Which for ever will cling to me."—

"Now, woeful pilgrim, say not so!
But kneel thee down to me,
And shrive thee so clean of thy deadly sin,
That absolved thou mayest be."—

"And who art thou, thou Gray Brother,
That I should shrive to thee,
When He, to whom are given the keys of earth and heaven,
Has no power to pardon me?"—

"O I am sent from a distant clime,
Five thousand miles away,
And all to absolve a foul, foul crime,
Done *here* 'twixt night and day."

The pilgrim kneel'd him on the sand,
And thus began his saye—
When on his neck an ice-cold hand
Did that Gray Brother laye.

* * * * *

BALLADS, TRANSLATED, OR IMITATED, FROM THE GERMAN, &c.

WILLIAM AND HELEN.

[1796.]

IMITATED FROM THE "LENORÉ" OF BÜRGER.

I.

FROM heavy dreams fair Helen rose,
And eyed the dawning red:
"Alas, my love, thou tarriest long!
O art thou false or dead?"—

II.

With gallant Fred'rick's princely power
He sought the bold Crusade;
But not a word from Judah's wars
Told Helen how he sped.

III.

With Paynim and with Saracen
At length a truce was made,
And ev'ry knight return'd to dry
The tears his love had shed.

IV.

Our gallant host was homeward bound
With many a song of joy;
Green waved the laurel in each plume,
The badge of victory.

V.

And old and young, and sire and son,
To meet them crowd the way,
With shouts, and mirth, and melody,
The debt of love to pay.

VI.

Full many a maid her true-love met,
And sobb'd in his embrace,
And flutt'ring joy in tears and smiles
Array'd full many a face.

VII.

Nor joy nor smile for Helen sad;
She sought the host in vain;
For none could tell her William's fate,
If faithless, or if slain.

VIII.

The martial band is past and gone;
She rends her raven hair,
And in distraction's bitter mood
She weeps with wild despair.

IX.

"O rise, my child," her mother said,
"Nor sorrow thus in vain;
A perjured lover's fleeting heart
No tears recall again."—

X.

"O mother, what is gone, is gone,
What 's lost for ever lorn:
Death, death alone can comfort me;
O had I ne'er been born!

XI.

"O break, my heart, O break at once!
Drink my life-blood, Despair!
No joy remains on earth for me,
For me in heaven no share."—

XII.

"O enter not in judgment, Lord!"
The pious mother prays;
"Impute not guilt to thy frail child!
She knows not what she says.

XIII.

"O say thy Pater-noster, child!
O turn to God and grace!
His will, that turn'd thy bliss to bale,
Can change thy bale to bliss."—

XIV.

"O mother, mother, what is bliss?
O mother, what is bale?
My William's love was heaven on earth,
Without it earth is hell.

XV.

"Why should I pray to ruthless Heaven,
Since my loved William's slain?
I only pray'd for William's sake,
And all my prayers were vain."—

XVI.

"O take the sacrament, my child,
And check these tears that flow;
By resignation's humble prayer,
O hallow'd be thy woe!"—

XVII.

"No sacrament can quench this fire,
Or slake this scorching pain;
No sacrament can bid the dead
Arise and live again.

XVIII.

"O break, my heart, O break at once!
Be thou my god, Despair!
Heaven's heaviest blow has fallen on me,
And vain each fruitless prayer."—

XIX.

"O enter not in judgment, Lord,
With thy frail child of clay!
She knows not what her tongue has spoke;
Impute it not, I pray!

XX.

"Forbear, my child, this desperate woe,
And turn to God and grace;
Well can devotion's heavenly glow
Convert thy bale to bliss."—

XXI.

"O mother, mother, what is bliss?
O mother, what is bale?
Without my William what were heaven,
Or with him what were hell?"—

XXII.

Wild she arraigns the eternal doom,
Upbraids each sacred power,
Till, spent, she sought her silent room,
All in the lonely tower.

XXIII.

She beat her breast, she wrung her hands,
Till sun and day were o'er,
And through the glimmering lattice shone
The twinkling of the star.

XXIV.

Then, crash! the heavy drawbridge fell
That o'er the moat was hung;
And, clatter! clatter! on its boards
The hoof of courser rung.

XXV.

The clank of echoing steel was heard,
As off the rider bounded;
And slowly on the winding stair
A heavy footstep sounded.

XXVI.

And hark! and hark! a knock—Tap! tap!
A rustling stifled noise;—
Door-latch and tinkling staples ring;—
At length a whispering voice.

XXVII.

"Awake, awake, arise, my love!
How, Helen, dost thou fare?
Wak'st thou, or sleep'st? laugh'st thou, or weep'st?
Hast thought on me, my fair?"—

XXVIII.

"My love! my love!—so late by night!—
I waked, I wept for thee:
Much have I borne since dawn of morn;
Where, William, couldst thou be?"—

XXIX.

"We saddle late—from Hungary
I rode since darkness fell;
And to its bourne we both return
Before the matin-bell."—

XXX.

"O rest this night within my arms,
And warm thee in their fold!
Chill howls through hawthorn bush the wind:—
My love is deadly cold."

XXXI.

"Let the wind howl through hawthorn bush!
This night we must away;
The steed is wight, the spur is bright;
I cannot stay till day.

XXXII.

"Busk, busk, and boune!† Thou mount'st behind
Upon my black barb steed:
O'er stock and stile, a hundred miles,
We haste to bridal bed."—

XXXIII.

"To-night—to-night a hundred miles!—
O dearest William, stay!
The bell strikes twelve—dark, dismal hour!
O wait, my love, till day!"—

XXXIV.

"Look here, look here—the moon shines clear—
Full fast, I ween, we ride;
Mount and away, for ere the day
We reach our bridal bed.

XXXV.

"The black barb snorts, the bridle rings;
Haste, busk, and boune, and seat thee!
The feast is made, the chamber spread,
The bridal guests await thee."—

XXXVI.

Strong love prevail'd: she busks, she bounes,
She mounts the barb behind,
And round her darling William's waist
Her lily arms she twined.

XXXVII.

And, hurry! hurry! off they rode,
As fast as fast might be;
Spurn'd from the courser's thundering heels
The flashing pebbles flee.

† *Busk*—to dress. *Boune*—to prepare one's self for a journey.

XXXVIII.

And on the right, and on the left,
Ere they could snatch a view,
Fast, fast each mountain, mead, and plain,
And cot, and castle, flew.

XXXIX.

"Sit fast—dost fear?—The moon shines clear—
Fleet goes my barb—keep hold!
Fear'st thou?"—"O no!" she faintly said;
"But why so stern and cold?

XL.

"What yonder rings? what yonder sings?
Why shrieks the owlet grey?"
"'Tis death-bells' clang, 'tis funeral song,
The body to the clay.

XLI.

"With song and clang, at morrow's dawn,
Ye may inter the dead:
To-night I ride, with my young bride,
To deck our bridal bed.

XLII.

"Come with thy choir, thou coffin'd guest,
To swell our nuptial song!
Come, priest, to bless our marriage feast!
Come all, come all along!"—

XLIII.

Ceased clang and song; down sunk the bier;
The shrouded corpse arose:
And, hurry! hurry! all the train
The thundering steed pursues.

XLIV.

And, forward! forward! on they go;
High snorts the straining steed!
Thick pants the rider's labouring breath,
As headlong on they speed.

XLV.

"O William, why this savage haste?
And where thy bridal bed?"—
"'Tis distant far, low, damp, and chill,
And narrow, trustless maid."—

XLVI.

"No room for me?"—"Enough for both;—
Speed, speed, my barb, thy course!"
O'er thundering bridge, through boiling surge,
He drove the furious horse.

XLVII.

Tramp! tramp! along the land they rode,
Splash! splash! along the sea;
The scourge is wight, the spur is bright,
The flashing pebbles flee.

XLVIII.

Fled past on right and left how fast
Each forest, grove, and bower!
On right and left fled past how fast
Each city, town, and tower!

XLIX.

"Dost fear? dost fear? The moon shines clear,
Dost fear to ride with me?—
Hurrah! hurrah! the dead can ride!"—
"O William, let them be!—

L.

"See there, see there! What yonder swings
And creaks 'mid whistling rain?"—
"Gibbet and steel, th' accursèd wheel;
A murderer in his chain.—

LI.

"Hollo! thou felon, follow here:
To bridal bed we ride;
And thou shalt prance a fetter-dance
Before me and my bride."—

LII.

And, hurry! hurry! clash, clash, clash!
The wasted form descends;
And fleet as wind through hazel bush
The wild career attends.

LIII.

Tramp! tramp! along the land they rode,
Splash! splash! along the sea;
The scourge is red, the spur drops blood,
The flashing pebbles flee.

LIV.

How fled what moonshine faintly show'd!
How fled what darkness hid!
How fled the earth beneath their feet,
The heaven above their head!

LV.

"Dost fear? dost fear? The moon shines clear,
And well the dead can ride;
Does faithful Helen fear for them?"—
"O leave in peace the dead!"—

LVI.

"Barb! Barb! methinks I hear the cock;
The sand will soon be run:
Barb! Barb! I smell the morning air;
The race is well-nigh done."—

LVII.

Tramp! tramp! along the land they rode,
Splash! splash! along the sea;
The scourge is red, the spur drops blood,
The flashing pebbles flee.

LVIII.

"Hurrah! hurrah! well ride the dead;
The bride, the bride is come;
And soon we reach the bridal bed,
For, Helen, here's my home."—

LIX.

Reluctant on its rusty hinge
Revolved an iron door,
And by the pale moon's setting beam
Were seen a church and tower.

LX.

With many a shriek and cry whiz round
The birds of midnight, scared;
And rustling like autumnal leaves
Unhallow'd ghosts were heard.

LXI.

O'er many a tomb and tombstone pale
He spurr'd the fiery horse,
Till sudden at an open grave
He check'd the wondrous course.

LXII.

The falling gauntlet quits the rein,
Down drops the casque of steel,
The cuirass leaves his shrinking side,
The spur his gory heel.

LXIII.

The eyes desert the naked skull,
The mould'ring flesh the bone,
Till Helen's lily arms entwine
A ghastly skeleton.

LXIV.

The furious barb snorts fire and foam,
And, with a fearful bound,
Dissolves at once in empty air,
And leaves her on the ground.

LXV.

Half seen by fits, by fits half heard,
Pale spectres flit along,
Wheel round the maid in dismal dance,
And howl the funeral song;

LXVI.

"E'en when the heart's with anguish cleft,
Revere the doom of Heaven,
Her soul is from her body reft;
Her spirit be forgiven!"

THE WILD HUNTSMAN.

[1796.]

AN IMITATION OF THE "WILD JAGER" OF THE POET BURGER.

THE Wildgrave winds his bugle horn,
To horse, to horse! halloo, halloo!
His fiery courser snuffs the morn,
And thronging serfs their lord pursue.

The eager pack, from couples freed,
Dash through the bush, the brier, the brake; [steed,
While answering hound, and horn, and
The mountain echoes startling wake.

The beams of God's own hallow'd day
Had painted yonder spire with gold,
And, calling sinful man to pray,
Loud, long, and deep the bell had toll'd:

But still the Wildgrave onward rides;
Halloo, halloo! and, hark again!
When, spurring from opposing sides,
Two Stranger Horsemen join the train.

Who was each Stranger, left and right,
Well may I guess, but dare not tell;
The right-hand steed was silver white,
The left, the swarthy hue of hell.

The right-hand Horseman, young and fair,
His smile was like the morn of May;
The left, from eye of tawny glare,
Shot midnight lightning's lurid ray.

He waved his huntsman's cap on high,
Cried, "Welcome, welcome, noble lord!
What sport can earth, or sea, or sky,
To match the princely chase, afford?"

"Cease thy loud bugle's changing knell,"
Cried the fair youth, with silver voice;
"And for devotion's choral swell,
Exchange the rude unhallow'd noise.

"To-day the ill-omen'd chase forbear,
Yon bell yet summons to the fane;
To-day the Warning Spirit hear,
To-morrow thou mayst mourn in vain."

"Away, and sweep the glades along!"
The Sable Hunter hoarse replies;
"To muttering monks leave matin-song,
And bells, and books, and mysteries."

The Wildgrave spurr'd his ardent steed,
And, launching forward with a bound,
"Who, for thy drowsy priestlike rede,
Would leave the jovial horn and hound?

"Hence, if our manly sport offend!
With pious fools go chant and pray:—
Well hast thou spoke, my dark-brow'd friend;
Halloo, halloo! and, hark away!"

The Wildgrave spurr'd his courser light,
O'er moss and moor, o'er holt and hill;
And on the left, and on the right,
Each stranger Horseman follow'd still.

Up springs, from yonder tangled thorn,
A stag more white than mountain snow;
And louder rung the Wildgrave's horn,
"Hark forward, forward! holla, ho!"

A heedless wretch has cross'd the way;
He gasps the thundering hoofs below;—
But, live who can, or die who may,
Still, "Forward, forward!" on they go.

See, where yon simple fences meet,
A field with Autumn's blessings crown'd;
See, prostrate at the Wildgrave's feet,
A husbandman with toil embrown'd;

"O mercy, mercy, noble lord!
Spare the poor's pittance," was his cry,
"Earn'd by the sweat these brows have pour'd,
In scorching hour of fierce July."—

Earnest the right-hand Stranger pleads,
The left still cheering to the prey;
The impetuous Earl no warning heeds,
But furious holds the onward way.

"Away, thou hound! so basely born,
Or dread the scourge's echoing blow!"—
Then loudly rung his bugle-horn,
"Hark forward, forward, holla, ho!"

So said, so done:—A single bound
Clears the poor labourer's humble pale:
Wild follows man, and horse, and hound,
Like dark December's stormy gale.

And man and horse, and hound and horn,
Destructive sweep the field along;
While, joying o'er the wasted corn,
Fell Famine marks the maddening throng.

Again uproused, the timorous prey [hill;
Scours moss and moor, and holt and
Hard run, he feels his strength decay,
And trusts for life his simple skill.

Too dangerous solitude appear'd;
He seeks the shelter of the crowd;
Amid the flock's domestic herd
His harmless head he hopes to shroud.

O'er moss and moor, and holt and hill,
His track the steady blood-hounds trace;
O'er moss and moor, unwearied still,
The furious Earl pursues the chase.

Full lowly did the herdsman fall;—
"O spare, thou noble Baron, spare
These herds, a widow's little all;
These flocks, an orphan's fleecy care!"—

Earnest the right-hand Stranger pleads,
The left still cheering to the prey;
The Earl nor prayer nor pity heeds,
But furious keeps the onward way.

"Unmanner'd dog! To stop my sport,
Vain were thy cant and beggar whine,
Though human spirits, of thy sort,
Were tenants of these carrion kine!"—

Again he winds his bugle horn,
"Hark forward, forward, holla, ho!"
And through the herd, in ruthless scorn,
He cheers his furious hounds to go.

In heaps the throttled victims fall;
Down sinks their mangled herdsman near;
The murderous cries the stag appal,—
Again he starts, new-nerved by fear.

With blood besmear'd, and white with foam,
While big the tears of anguish pour,
He seeks, amid the forest's gloom,
The humble hermit's hallow'd bower.

But man and horse, and horn and hound,
Fast rattling on his traces go;
The sacred chapel rung around
With "Hark away! and, holla, ho!"

All mild, amid the rout profane,
The holy hermit pour'd his prayer;
"Forbear with blood God's house to stain;
Revere his altar, and forbear!

"The meanest brute has rights to plead,
Which, wrong'd by cruelty or pride,
Draw vengeance on the ruthless head:—
Be warn'd at length, and turn aside."

Still the Fair Horseman anxious pleads;
The Black, wild whooping, points the prey:—
Alas! the Earl no warning heeds,
But frantic keeps the forward way.

"Holy or not, or right or wrong,
Thy altar, and its rites, I spurn;
Not sainted martyrs' sacred song,
Not God himself, shall make me turn!"

He spurs his horse, he winds his horn,
"Hark forward, forward, holla, ho!"—
But off, on whirlwind's pinions borne,
The stag, the hut, the hermit, go.

And horse and man, and horn and hound,
And clamour of the chase, was gone;
For hoofs, and howls, and bugle-sound,
A deadly silence reign'd alone.

Wild gazed the affrighted Earl around;
He strove in vain to wake his horn,
In vain to call: for not a sound
Could from his anxious lips be borne.

He listens for his trusty hounds;
No distant baying reach'd his ears:
His courser, rooted to the ground,
The quickening spur unmindful bears.

Still dark and darker frown the shades,
Dark as the darkness of the grave;
And not a sound the still invades,
Save what a distant torrent gave.

High o'er the sinner's humbled head
At length the solemn silence broke;
And, from a cloud of swarthy red,
The awful voice of thunder spoke.

"Oppressor of creation fair!
Apostate Spirits' harden'd tool!
Scorner of God! Scourge of the poor!
The measure of thy cup is full.

"Be chased for ever through the wood;
For ever roam the affrighted wild;
And let thy fate instruct the proud,
God's meanest creature is His child."

'Twas hushed:—One flash, of sombre glare,
With yellow tinged the forests brown;
Uprose the Wildgrave's bristling hair,
And horror chill'd each nerve and bone.

Cold pour'd the sweat in freezing rill;
A rising wind began to sing;
And, louder, louder, louder still,
Brought storm and tempest on its wing.

Earth heard the call;—her entrails rend;
From yawning rifts, with many a yell,
Mix'd with sulphureous flames, ascend
The misbegotten dogs of hell.

What ghastly huntsman next arose,
Well may I guess, but dare not tell;
His eye like midnight lightning glows,
His steed the swarthy hue of hell.

The Wildgrave flies o'er bush and thorn,
With many a shriek of helpless woe;
Behind him hound, and horse, and horn,
And, "Hark away, and holla, ho!"

With wild despair's reverted eye,
Close, close behind he marks the throng,
With bloody fangs and eager cry;
In frantic fear he scours along.—

Still, still shall last the dreadful chase,
Till time itself shall have an end:
By day, they scour earth's cavern'd space,
At midnight's witching hour, ascend.

This is the horn, and hound, and horse,
That oft the lated peasant hears;
Appall'd, he signs the frequent cross,
When the wild din invades his ears.

The wakeful priest oft drops a tear
For human pride, for human woe,
When, at his midnight mass, he hears
The infernal cry of, "Holla, ho!"

THE FIRE-KING.

"The blessings of the evil Genii, which are curses, were upon him."—*Eastern Tale.*

[1801.]

THIS ballad was written at the request of MR. LEWIS, to be inserted in his *Tales of Wonder*. It is the third in a series of four ballads, on the subject of Elementary Spirits. The story is, however, partly historical; for it is recorded, that, during the struggles of the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem, a Knight Templar, called Saint Alban, deserted to the Saracens, and defeated the Christians in many combats, till he was finally routed and slain, in a conflict with King Baldwin, under the walls of Jerusalem.

BOLD knights and fair dames, to my harp give an ear,
Of love, and of war, and of wonder to hear,
And you haply may sigh, in the midst of your glee,
At the tale of Count Albert, and fair Rosalie.

O see you that castle, so strong and so high?
And see you that lady, the tear in her eye?
And see you that palmer, from Palestine's land,
The shell on his hat, and the staff in his hand?—

"Now palmer, grey palmer, O tell unto me,
What news bring you home from the Holy Countrie?
And how goes the warfare by Galilee's strand?
And how fare our nobles, the flower of the land?"—

"O well goes the warfare by Galilee's wave,
For Gilead, and Nablous, and Ramah we have;
And well fare our nobles by Mount Lebanon,
For the Heathen have lost, and the Christians have won."

A fair chain of gold 'mid her ringlets she has flung:
There hung; O'er the palmer's grey locks the fair chain there hung:
"O palmer, grey palmer, this chain be thy fee,
For the news thou hast brought from the Holy Countrie.

"And, palmer, good palmer, by Galilee's wave,
O saw ye Count Albert, the gentle and brave?
When the Crescent went back, and the Red-cross rush'd on,
O saw ye him foremost on Mount Lebanon?"—

"O lady, fair lady, the green tree it grows;
O lady, fair lady, the stream pure it flows;
Your castle stands strong, and your hopes soar on high;
But, lady, fair lady, all blossoms to die.

"The green boughs they wither, the thunderbolt falls, [walls;
It leaves of your castle but levin-scorch'd
The pure stream runs muddy; the gay hope is gone; [non."
Count Albert is prisoner on Mount Leba-

O she's ta'en a horse, should be fleet at her speed; [at her need;
And she's ta'en a sword, should be sharp
And she has ta'en shipping for Palestine's land, [hand.
To ransom Count Albert from Soldanrie's

Small thought had Count Albert on fair Rosalie, [hood, had he;
Small thought on his faith, or his knight-
A heathenish damsel his light heart had won, [Lebanon.
The Soldan's fair daughter of Mount

"O Christian, brave Christian, my love wouldst thou be, [to thee:
Three things must thou do ere I hearken
Our laws and our worship on thee shalt thou take; [sake.
And this thou shalt first do for Zulema's

"And, next, in the cavern, where burns evermore, [adore,
The mystical flame which the Curdmans
Alone, and in silence, three nights shalt thou wake;
And this thou shalt next do for Zulema's sake.

"And, last, thou shalt aid us with counsel and hand, [tine's land;
And drive the Frank robber from Pales-
For my lord and my love then Count Albert I'll take, [sake."
When all this is accomplish'd for Zulema's

He has thrown by his helmet, and cross-handled sword, [Lord;
Renouncing his knighthood, denying his
He has ta'en the green caftan, and turban put on,
For the love of the Maiden of fair Lebanon.

And in the dread cavern, deep deep under ground,
Which fifty steel gates and steel portals surround,
He has watch'd until daybreak, but sight saw he none, [of stone.
Save the flame burning bright on its altar

Amazed was the Princess, the Soldan amazed, [they gazed;
Sore murmur'd the priests as on Albert
They search'd all his garments, and, under his weeds, [beads.
They found, and took from him, his rosary

Again in the cavern, deep deep under ground, [whistled round;
He watch'd the lone night, while the winds
Far off was their murmur, it came not more nigh, [else did he spy.
The flame burn'd unmoved, and nought

Loud murmur'd the priests, and amazed was the King, [they sing;
While many dark spells of their witchcraft
They search'd Albert's body, and, lo! on his breast [impress'd.
Was the sign of the Cross, by his father

The priests they erase it with care and with pain, [again;
And the recreant return'd to the cavern
But, as he descended, a whisper there fell;
It was his good angel, who bade him farewell!

High bristled his hair, his heart flutter'd and beat, [to retreat;
And he turn'd him five steps, half-resolved
But his heart it was harden'd, his purpose was gone, [Lebanon.
When he thought of the Maiden of fair

Scarce pass'd he the archway, the threshold scarce trod,
When the winds from the four points of heaven were abroad, [ring,
They made each steel portal to rattle and
And, borne on the blast, came the dread Fire-King.

Full sore rock'd the cavern whene'er he drew nigh, [high;
The fire on the altar blazed bickering and
In volcanic explosions the mountains proclaim [Flame.
The dreadful approach of the Monarch of

Unmeasured in height, undistinguish'd in form, [was storm;
His breath it was lightning, his voice it
I ween the stout heart of Count Albert was tame, [of Flame.
When he saw in his terrors the Monarch

In his hand a broad falchion blue-glimmer'd through smoke,
And Mount Lebanon shook as the monarch he spoke:
"With this brand shalt thou conquer, thus long, and no more, [adore."
Till thou bend to the Cross, and the Virgin

The cloud-shrouded Arm gives the weapon; and see! [his knee:
The recreant receives the charm'd gift on
The thunders growl distant, and faint gleam the fires, [retires.
As, borne on the whirlwind, the phantom

Count Albert has arm'd him the Paynim among, [it was strong;
Though his heart it was false, yet his arm
And the Red-cross wax'd faint, and the Crescent came on, [Lebanon.
From the day he commanded on Mount

From Lebanon's forests to Galilee's wave,
The sands of Samaar drank the blood of the brave;
Till the Knights of the Temple, and Knights of Saint John, [came on.
With Salem's King Baldwin, against him

The war-cymbals clatter'd, the trumpets replied, [on each side;
The lances were couch'd, and they closed
And horsemen and horses Count Albert o'erthrew, [Baldwin unto.
Till he pierced the thick tumult King

Against the charm'd blade which Count Albert did wield, [Red-cross shield;
The fence had been vain of the King's
But a Page thrust him forward the monarch before, [wore.
And cleft the proud turban the renegade

So fell was the dint, that Count Albert stoop'd low [saddlebow;
Before the cross'd shield, to his steel
And scarce had he bent to the Red-cross his head,— [wittingly said.
"*Bonne Grace, Notre Dame!*" he un-

Sore sigh'd the charm'd sword, for its virtue was o'er, [seen more;
It sprung from his grasp, and was never
But true men have said, that the lightning's red wing [Fire-King.
Did waft back the brand to the dread

He clench'd his set teeth, and his gauntleted hand; [on the strand;
He stretch'd, with one buffet, that Page
As back from the stripling the broken casque roll'd, [lets of gold.
You might see the blue eyes, and the ring-

Short time had Count Albert in horror to stare [blood-clotted hair;
On those death-swimming eyeballs, and
For down came the Templars, like Cedron in flood, [blood.
And dyed their long lances in Saracen

The Saracens, Curdmans, and Ishmaelites yield [shield;
To the scallop, the saltier, and crossleted
And the eagles were gorged with the infidel dead, [head.
From Bethsaida's fountains to Naphthali's

The battle is over on Bethsaida's plain.—
Oh, who is yon Paynim lies stretch'd 'mid the slain? [knee?
And who is yon Page lying cold at his
Oh, who but Count Albert and fair Rosalie!

The Lady was buried in Salem's bless'd bound, [hound:
The Count he was left to the vulture and
Her soul to high mercy Our Lady did bring; [King.
His went on the blast to the dread Fire-

Yet many a minstrel, in harping, can tell,
How the Red-cross it conquer'd, the Crescent it fell: [their glee,
And lords and gay ladies have sigh'd, 'mid
At the tale of Count Albert and fair Rosalie.

FREDERICK AND ALICE.

[1801.]

THIS tale is imitated, rather than translated, from a fragment introduced in Goethe's "Claudina von Villa Bella," where it is sung by a member of a gang of banditti, to engage the attention of the family, while his companions break into the castle. It owes any little merit it may possess to my friend Mr. LEWIS, to whom it was sent in an extremely rude state; and who, after some material improvements, published it in his *Tales of Wonder*.

FREDERICK leaves the land of France,
Homeward hastes his steps to measure,
Careless casts the parting glance
On the scene of former pleasure.

Joying in his prancing steed,
Keen to prove his untried blade,
Hope's gay dreams the soldier lead
Over mountain, moor, and glade.

Helpless, ruin'd, left forlorn,
Lovely Alice wept alone;
Mourn'd o'er love's fond contract torn,
Hope, and peace, and honour flown.

Mark her breast's convulsive throbs!
See, the tear of anguish flows!—
Mingling soon with bursting sobs,
Loud the laugh of frenzy rose.

Wild she cursed, and wild she pray'd;
Seven long days and nights are o'er;
Death in pity brought his aid,
As the village bell struck four.

Far from her, and far from France,
Faithless Frederick onward rides;
Marking, blithe, the morning's glance
Mantling o'er the mountain's sides.

Heard ye not the boding sound,
As the tongue of yonder tower,
Slowly, to the hills around,
Told the fourth, the fated hour?

Starts the steed, and snuffs the air,
Yet no cause of dread appears;
Bristles high the rider's hair,
Struck with strange mysterious fears.

Desperate, as his terrors rise,
In the steed the spur he hides;
From himself in vain he flies;
Anxious, restless, on he rides.

Seven long days, and seven long nights,
Wild he wander'd, woe the while!
Ceaseless care, and causeless fright,
Urge his footsteps many a mile.

Dark the seventh sad night descends;
Rivers swell, and rain-streams pour;
While the deafening thunder lends
All the terrors of its roar.

Weary, wet, and spent with toil,
Where his head shall Frederick hide?
Where, but in yon ruin'd aisle,
By the lightning's flash descried.

To the portal, dank and low,
Fast his steed the wanderer bound:
Down a ruin'd staircase slow,
Next his darkling way he wound.

Long drear vaults before him lie!
Glimmering lights are seen to glide!—
"Blessed Mary, hear my cry!
Deign a sinner's steps to guide!"

Often lost their quivering beam,
Still the lights move slow before,
Till they rest their ghastly gleam
Right against an iron door.

Thundering voices from within,
Mix'd with peals of laughter, rose;
As they fell, a solemn strain
Lent its wild and wondrous close!

'Midst the din, he seem'd to hear
Voice of friends, by death removed;—
Well he knew that solemn air,
'Twas the lay that Alice loved.—

Hark! for now a solemn knell
Four times on the still night broke;
Four times, at its deaden'd swell,
Echoes from the ruins spoke.

As the lengthen'd clangours die,
Slowly opes the iron door!
Straight a banquet met his eye,
But a funeral's form it wore!

Coffins for the seats extend;
All with black the board was spread;
Girt by parent, brother, friend,
Long since number'd with the dead!

Alice, in her grave-clothes bound,
Ghastly smiling, points a seat;
All arose, with thundering sound;
All the expected stranger greet.

High their meagre arms they wave,
Wild their notes of welcome swell;—
"Welcome, traitor, to the grave!
Perjured, bid the light farewell!"

THE BATTLE OF SEMPACH.

[1818.]

THESE verses are a literal translation of an ancient Swiss ballad upon the battle of Sempach, fought 9th July, 1386, being the victory by which the Swiss cantons established their independence; the author, Albert Tchudi, denominated the Souter, from his profession of a shoemaker. He was a citizen of Lucerne, esteemed highly among his countrymen, both for his powers as a *Meister-Singer*, or minstrel, and his courage as a soldier.

'TWAS when among our linden-trees
The bees had housed in swarms
(And grey-hair'd peasants say that these
Betoken foreign arms),

Then look'd we down to Willisow,
The land was all in flame;
We knew the Archduke Leopold
With all his army came.

The Austrian nobles made their vow,
So hot their heart and bold,
"On Switzer carles we'll trample now,
And slay both young and old."

With clarion loud, and banner proud,
From Zurich on the lake,
In martial pomp and fair array,
Their onward march they make.

"Now list, ye lowland nobles all—
Ye seek the mountain strand,
Nor wot ye what shall be your lot
In such a dangerous land.

"I rede ye, shrive ye of your sins,
Before ye farther go;
A skirmish in Helvetian hills
May send your souls to woe."—

"But where now shall we find a priest
Our shrift that he may hear?"—
"The Switzer priest† has ta'en the field,
He deals a penance drear.

"Right heavily upon your head
He'll lay his hand of steel;
And with his trusty partisan
Your absolution deal."—

'Twas on a Monday morning then,
The corn was steep'd in dew,
And merry maids had sickles ta'en,
When the host to Sempach drew.

The stalwart men of fair Lucerne
Together have they join'd;
The pith and core of manhood stern,
Was none cast looks behind.

It was the Lord of Hare-castle,
And to the Duke he said,
"Yon little band of brethren true
Will meet us undismay'd."—

"O Hare-castle, thou heart of hare!"
Fierce Oxenstern replied.—
"Shalt see then how the game will fare,"
The taunted knight replied.

There was lacing then of helmets bright,
And closing ranks amain;
The peaks they hew'd from their boot-points
Might well-nigh load a wain.‡

And thus they to each other said,
"Yon handful down to hew
Will be no boastful tale to tell,
The peasants are so few."—

The gallant Swiss Confederates there
They pray'd to God aloud,
And he display'd his rainbow fair
Against a swarthy cloud.

Then heart and pulse throbb'd more and more
With courage firm and high,
And down the good Confederates bore
On the Austrian chivalry.

The Austrian Lion 'gan to growl,
And toss his mane and tail;
And ball, and shaft, and crossbow bolt,
Went whistling forth like hail.

Lance, pike, and halbert mingled there,
The game was nothing sweet;
The boughs of many a stately tree
Lay shiver'd at their feet.

The Austrian men-at-arms stood fast,
So close their spears they laid;
It chafed the gallant Winkelreid,
Who to his comrades said—

"I have a virtuous wife at home,
A wife and infant son;
I leave them to my country's care,—
This field shall soon be won.

"These nobles lay their spears right thick,
And keep full firm array,
Yet shall my charge their order break,
And make my brethren way."

He rush'd against the Austrian band
In desperate career,
And with his body, breast, and hand,
Bore down each hostile spear.

Four lances splinter'd on his crest,
Six shiver'd in his side;
Still on the serried files he press'd—
He broke their ranks, and died.

This patriot's self-devoted deed
First tamed the Lion's mood,
And the four forest cantons freed
From thraldom by his blood.

Right where his charge had made a lane
His valiant comrades burst,
With sword, and axe, and partisan,
And hack, and stab, and thrust.

The daunted Lion 'gan to whine,
And granted ground amain,
The Mountain Bull† he bent his brows,
And gored his sides again.

Then lost was banner, spear, and shield,
At Sempach in the flight,
The cloister vaults at Konig's-field
Hold many an Austrian knight.

It was the Archduke Leopold,
So lordly would he ride,
But he came against the Switzer churls,
And they slew him in his pride.

The heifer said unto the bull,
"And shall I not complain?
There came a foreign nobleman
To milk me on the plain.

† All the Swiss clergy able to bear arms fought in this patriotic war.

‡ Probably referring to the long-pointed boots then in fashion, the peaks of which would require to be cut off when the wearer alighted to fight on foot.

† The Canton of Uri was so named from the Urus or wild-bull

"One thrust of thine outrageous horn
Has gall'd the knight so sore,
That to the churchyard he is borne,
To range our glens no more."

An Austrian noble left the stour,
And fast the fight 'gan take;
And he arrived in luckless hour
At Sempach on the lake.

He and his squire a fisher call'd
(His name was Hans Von Rot),
"For love, or meed, or charity,
Receive us in thy boat!"

Their anxious call the fisher heard,
And, glad the meed to win,
His shallop to the shore he steer'd,
And took the flyers in.

And while against the tide and wind
Hans stoutly row'd his way,
The noble to his follower sign'd
He should the boatman slay.

The fisher's back was to them turn'd,
The squire his dagger drew,
Hans saw his shadow in the lake,
The boat he overthrew.

He 'whelm'd the boat, and as they strove,
He stunn'd them with his oar,
"Now, drink ye deep, my gentle sirs,
You 'll ne'er stab boatman more.

"Two gilded fishes in the lake
This morning have I caught,
Their silver scales may much avail,
Their carrion flesh is naught."

It was a messenger of woe
Has sought the Austrian land:
"Ah! gracious lady, evil news!
My lord lies on the strand.

"At Sempach, on the battle-field,
His bloody corpse lies there."—
"Ah, gracious God!" the lady cried,
"What tidings of despair!"

Now would you know the minstrel wight
Who sings of strife so stern,
Albert the Souter is he hight,
A burgher of Lucerne.

A merry man was he, I wot,
The night he made the lay,
Returning from the bloody spot,
Where God had judged the day.

THE NOBLE MORINGER.

AN ANCIENT BALLAD.

[1819.]

I.

O, WILL you hear a knightly tale of old Bohemian day,
It was the noble Moringer in wedlock bed he lay;
He halsed and kiss'd his dearest dame, that was as sweet as May,
And said, "Now, lady of my heart, attend the words I say.

II.

"'Tis I have vow'd a pilgrimage unto a distant shrine,
And I must seek Saint Thomas-land, and leave the land that's mine;
Here shalt thou dwell the while in state, so thou wilt pledge thy fay,
That thou for my return wilt wait seven twelvemonths and a day."

III.

Then out and spoke that Lady bright, sore troubled in her cheer,
"Now tell me true, thou noble knight, what order tak'st thou here;
And who shall lead thy vassal band, and hold thy lordly sway,
And be thy lady's guardian true when thou art far away?"

IV.

Out spoke the noble Moringer, "Of that have thou no care,
There 's many a valiant gentleman of me holds living fair; [and my state,
The trustiest shall rule my land, my vassals
And be a guardian tried and true to thee, my lovely mate.

V.

"As Christian-man, I needs must keep the vow which I have plight,
When I am far in foreign land, remember thy true knight;
And cease, my dearest dame, to grieve, for vain were sorrow now,
But grant thy Moringer his leave, since God hath heard his vow."

VI.

It was the noble Moringer from bed he made him boune,
And met him there his Chamberlain, with ewer and with gown:
He flung the mantle on his back, 'twas furr'd with miniver,
He dipp'd his hand in water cold, and bathed his forehead fair.

VII.

"Now hear," he said, "Sir Chamberlain,
true vassal art thou mine,
And such the trust that I repose in that
proved worth of thine,
For seven years shalt thou rule my towers,
and lead my vassal train,
And pledge thee for my Lady's faith till I
return again."

VIII.

The Chamberlain was blunt and true, and
sturdily said he,
"Abide, my lord, and rule your own, and
take this rede from me;
That woman's faith's a brittle trust—Seven
twelvemonths didst thou say?
I'll pledge me for no lady's truth beyond
the seventh fair day."

IX.

The noble Baron turn'd him round, his
heart was full of care,
His gallant Esquire stood him nigh, he
was Marstetten's heir,
To whom he spoke right anxiously, "Thou
trusty squire to me,
Wilt thou receive this weighty trust when
I am o'er the sea?

X.

"To watch and ward my castle strong,
and to protect my land,
And to the hunting or the host to lead my
vassal band;
And pledge thee for my Lady's faith till
seven long years are gone,
And guard her as Our Lady dear was
guarded by Saint John."

XI.

Marstetten's heir was kind and true, but
fiery, hot, and young,
And readily he answer made with too
presumptuous tongue:
"My noble lord, cast care away, and on
your journey wend,
And trust this charge to me until your
pilgrimage have end.

XII.

"Rely upon my plighted faith, which
shall be truly tried,
To guard your lands, and ward your towers,
and with your vassals ride;
And for your lovely Lady's faith, so virtuous and so dear,
I'll gage my head it knows no change,
be absent thirty year."

XIII.

The noble Moringer took cheer when thus
he heard him speak,
And doubt forsook his troubled brow, and
sorrow left his cheek;
A long adieu he bids to all—hoists top-
sails, and away,
And wanders in Saint Thomas-land seven
twelvemonths and a day.

XIV.

It was the noble Moringer within an
orchard slept, [boding vision crept;
When on the Baron's slumbering sense a
And whisper'd in his ear a voice, "'Tis
time, Sir Knight, to wake, [take.
Thy lady and thy heritage another master

XV.

"Thy tower another banner knows, thy
steeds another rein,
And stoop them to another's will thy
gallant vassal train; [once and fair,
And she, the Lady of thy love, so faithful
This night within thy father's hall she
weds Marstetten's heir."

XVI.

It is the noble Moringer starts up and
tears his beard,
"O would that I had ne'er been born!
what tidings have I heard!
To lose my lordship and my lands the less
would be my care,
But, God! that e'er a squire untrue should
wed my Lady fair.

XVII.

"O good Saint Thomas, hear," he pray'd,
"my patron saint art thou,
A traitor robs me of my land even while I
pay my vow! [pure of name,
My wife he brings to infamy that was so
And I am far in foreign land, and must
endure the shame."

XVIII.

It was the good Saint Thomas, then, who
heard his pilgrim's prayer,
And sent a sleep so deep and dead that it
o'erpower'd his care;
He waked in fair Bohemian land out-
stretch'd beside a rill, [the left a mill.
High on the right a castle stood, low on

XIX.

The Moringer he started up as one from
spell unbound, [wildly all around;
And dizzy with surprise and joy gazed
"I know my father's ancient towers, the
mill, the stream I know,
Now blessed be my patron Saint who
cheer'd his pilgrim's woe!"

XX.

He leant upon his pilgrim staff, and to the
mill he drew, [their master knew;
So alter'd was his goodly form that none
The Baron to the miller said, "Good
friend, for charity,
Tell a poor palmer in your land what
tidings may there be?"

XXI.

The miller answer'd him again, "He knew of little news,
Save that the Lady of the land did a new bridegroom choose;
Her husband died in distant land, such is the constant word, [a worthy Lord.
His death sits heavy on our souls, he was

XXII.

"Of him I held the little mill which wins me living free, [was kind to me!
God rest the Baron in his grave, he still
And when Saint Martin's tide comes round, and millers take their toll,
The priest that prays for Moringer shall have both cope and stole."

XXIII.

It was the noble Moringer to climb the hill began, [and weary man;
And stood before the bolted gate a woe
"Now help me, every saint in heaven that can compassion take,
To gain the entrance of my hall this woeful match to break."

XXIV.

His very knock it sounded sad, his call was sad and slow,
For heart and head, and voice and hand, were heavy all with woe;
And to the warder thus he spoke: "Friend, to thy Lady say,
A pilgrim from Saint Thomas-land craves harbour for a day.

XXV.

"I've wander'd many a weary step, my strength is well-nigh done,
And if she turn me from her gate I'll see no morrow's sun;
I pray, for sweet Saint Thomas' sake, a pilgrim's bed and dole,
And for the sake of Moringer's, her once-loved husband's soul."

XXVI.

It was the stalwart warder then he came his dame before,—
"A pilgrim, worn and travel-toil'd, stands at the castle-door;
And prays, for sweet Saint Thomas' sake, for harbour and for dole,
And for the sake of Moringer, thy noble husband's soul."

XXVII.

The Lady's gentle heart was moved, "Do up the gate," she said,
"And bid the wanderer welcome be to banquet and to bed;
And since he names my husband's name, so that he lists to stay,
These towers shall be his harbourage a twelvemonth and a day."

XXVIII.

It was the stalwart warder then undid the portal broad, [threshold strode;
It was the noble Moringer that o'er the
"And have thou thanks, kind Heaven," he said, "though from a man of sin,
That the true lord stands here once more his castle-gate within."

XXIX.

Then up the halls paced Moringer, his step was sad and slow;
It sat full heavy on his heart, none seem'd their Lord to know;
He sat him on a lowly bench, oppress'd with woe and wrong,
Short space he sat, but ne'er to him seem'd little space so long.

XXX.

Now spent was day, and feasting o'er, and come was evening hour,
The time was nigh when new-made brides retire to nuptial bower;
"Our castle's wont," a bridesman said, "hath been both firm and long,
No guest to harbour in our halls till he shall chant a song."

XXXI.

Then spoke the youthful bridegroom there as he sat by the bride,
"My merry minstrel folk," quoth he, "lay shalm and harp aside;
Our pilgrim guest must sing a lay, the castle's rule to hold,
And well his guerdon will I pay with garment and with gold."—

XXXII.

"Chill flows the lay of frozen age," 'twas thus the pilgrim sung,
"Nor golden meed, nor garment gay, unlocks his heavy tongue;
Once did I sit, thou bridegroom gay, at board as rich as thine,
And by my side as fair a bride with all her charms was mine.

XXXIII.

"But time traced furrows on my face, and I grew silver-hair'd,
For locks of brown, and cheeks of youth, she left this brow and beard;
Once rich, but now a palmer poor, I tread life's latest stage, [of frozen age."
And mingle with your bridal mirth the lay

XXXIV.

It was the noble Lady there this woeful lay that hears,
And for the aged pilgrim's grief her eye was dimmed with tears;
She bade her gallant cupbearer a golden beaker take, [for her sake.
And bear it to the palmer poor to quaff it

XXXV.

It was the noble Moringer that dropp'd amid the wine [and so fine:
A bridal ring of burning gold so costly
Now listen, gentles, to my song, it tells you but the sooth,
'Twas with that very ring of gold he pledged his bridal truth.

XXXVI.

Then to the cupbearer he said, "Do me one kindly deed,
And should my better days return, full rich shall be thy meed; [bride so gay,
Bear back the golden cup again to yonder
And crave her of her courtesy to pledge the palmer grey."

XXXVII.

The cupbearer was courtly bred, nor was the boon denied, [it to the bride;
The golden cup he took again, and bore
"Lady," he said, "your reverend guest sends this, and bids me pray,
That, in thy noble courtesy, thou pledge the palmer grey."

XXXVIII.

The ring hath caught the Lady's eye, she views it close and near,
Then might you hear her shriek aloud, "The Moringer is here!"
Then might you see her start from seat, while tears in torrents fell,
But whether 'twas for joy or woe, the ladies best can tell.

XXXIX.

But loud she utter'd thanks to Heaven, and every saintly power,
That had return'd the Moringer before the midnight hour;
And loud she utter'd vow on vow, that never was there bride,
That had like her preserved her troth, or been so sorely tried.

XL.

"Yes, here I claim the praise," she said, "to constant matrons due,
Who keep the troth that they have plight, so steadfastly and true;
For count the term howe'er you will, so that you count aright,
Seven twelvemonths and a day are out when bells toll twelve to-night."

XLI.

It was Marstetten then rose up, his falchion there he drew, [his weapon threw;
He kneel'd before the Moringer, and down
"My oath and knightly faith are broke," these were the words he said,
"Then take, my liege, thy vassal's sword, and take thy vassal's head."

XLII.

The noble Moringer he smiled, and then aloud did say,
"He gathers wisdom that hath roam'd seven twelvemonths and a day;
My daughter now hath fifteen years, fame speaks her sweet and fair,
I give her for the bride you lose, and name her for my heir.

XLIII.

"The young bridegroom hath youthful bride, the old bridegroom the old,
Whose faith was kept till term and tide so punctually were told;
But blessings on the warder kind that oped my castle gate, [day too late."
For had I come at morrow tide, I came a

THE ERL-KING.

FROM THE GERMAN OF GOETHE.

(THE Erl-King is a goblin that haunts the Black Forest in Thuringia.

O, WHO rides by night thro' the woodland so wild?
It is the fond father embracing his child;
And close the boy nestles within his loved arm, [warm.
To hold himself fast, and to keep himself

"O father, see yonder I see yonder!" he says; [gaze!"—
"My boy, upon what dost thou fearfully
"O, 'tis the Erl-King with his crown and his shroud."
"No, my son, it is but a dark wreath of the cloud."

(THE ERL-KING SPEAKS.)

"O come and go with me, thou loveliest child; [guiled;
By many a gay sport shall thy time be be-
My mother keeps for thee full many a fair toy, [my boy."
And many a fine flower shall she pluck for

"O father, my father, and did you not hear [ear?"—
The Erl-King whisper so low in my
"Be still, my heart's darling—my child, be at ease; [the trees.'
It was but the wild blast as it sung thro'

ERL-KING.

"O wilt thou go with me, thou loveliest boy?
My daughter shall tend thee with care and with joy;
She shall bear thee so lightly thro' wet and thro' wild,
And press thee, and kiss thee, and sing to my child."

"O father, my father, and saw you not plain,
The Erl-King's pale daughter glide past thro' the rain?"—
"O yes, my loved treasure, I knew it full soon;
It was the grey willow that danced to the moon."

ERL-KING.

"O come and go with me, no longer delay,
Or else, silly child, I will drag thee away."—
"O father! O father! now, now keep your hold,
The Erl-King has seized me—his grasp is so cold!"—

Sore trembled the father; he spurr'd thro' the wild,
Clasping close to his bosom his shuddering child;
He reaches his dwelling in doubt and in dread,
But, clasp'd to his bosom, the infant was *dead!*"

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

THE VIOLET.

These lines were written in 1797, on occasion of the poet's disappointment in love. They were first published in the English Minstrelsy, 1810.

THE violet in her green-wood bower,
Where birchen boughs with hazels mingle,
May boast itself the fairest flower
In glen, or copse, or forest dingle.

Though fair her gems of azure hue,
Beneath the dew-drop's weight reclining;
I've seen an eye of lovelier blue,
More sweet through wat'ry lustre shining.

The summer sun that dew shall dry,
Ere yet the day be past its morrow;
Nor longer in my false love's eye
Remain'd the tear of parting sorrow.

TO A LADY.

WITH FLOWERS FROM A ROMAN WALL.

Written in 1797, on an excursion from Gillsland, in Cumberland.—See *Life*, vol. i. p. 365.

TAKE these flowers which, purple waving,
On the ruin'd rampart grew,
Where, the sons of freedom braving,
Rome's imperial standards flew.

Warriors from the breach of danger
Pluck no longer laurels there;
They but yield the passing stranger
Wild-flower wreaths for Beauty's hair.

WAR-SONG

OF THE ROYAL EDINBURGH LIGHT DRAGOONS.

Written in 1797, during the apprehension of a French invasion.

TO horse! to horse! the standard flies,
The bugles sound the call;
The Gallic navy stems the seas,
The voice of battle 's on the breeze,
Arouse ye, one and all!

From high Dunedin's towers we come,
A band of brothers true;
Our casques the leopard's spoils surround,
With Scotland's hardy thistle crown'd;
We boast the red and blue.†

Though tamely couch'd to Gallia's frown
Dull Holland's tardy train;
Their ravish'd toys tho' Romans mourn;
Though gallant Switzers vainly spurn,
And, foaming, gnaw the chain;

Oh! had they mark'd the avenging call‡
Their brethren's murder gave,
Disunion ne'er their ranks had mown,
Nor patriot valour, desperate grown,
Sought freedom in the grave!

Shall we, too, bend the stubborn head,
In Freedom's temple born,

† The royal colours.
‡ The allusion is to the massacre of the Swiss Guards on the fatal 10th of August, 1792.

Dress our pale cheek in timid smile,
To hail a master in our isle,
Or brook a victor's scorn?

No! though destruction o'er the land
Come pouring as a flood,
The sun, that sees our falling day,
Shall mark our sabres' deadly sway,
And set that night in blood.

For gold let Gallia's legions fight,
Or plunder's bloody gain;
Unbribed, unbought, our swords we draw,
To guard our king, to fence our law,
Nor shall their edge be vain.

If ever breath of British gale
Shall fan the tri-colour,
Or footstep of invader rude,
With rapine foul, and red with blood,
Pollute our happy shore,—

Then farewell home! and farewell friends!
Adieu, each tender tie!
Resolved, we mingle in the tide,
Where charging squadrons furious ride,
To conquer or to die.

To horse! to horse! the sabres gleam;
High sounds our bugle-call;
Combined by honour's sacred tie,
Our word is *Laws and Liberty!*
March forward, one and all!

THE BARD'S INCANTATION.

WRITTEN UNDER THE THREAT OF INVASION IN THE AUTUMN OF 1804.

THE forest of Glenmore is drear,
It is all of black pine and the dark oak-tree;
And the midnight wind, to the mountain deer,
Is whistling the forest lullaby:
The moon looks through the drifting storm,
But the troubled lake reflects not her form,
For the waves roll whitening to the land,
And dash against the shelvy strand.
There is a voice among the trees,
That mingles with the groaning oak—
That mingles with the stormy breeze,
And the lake-waves dashing against the rock;—
There is a voice within the wood,
The voice of the bard in fitful mood;
His song was louder than the blast,
As the bard of Glenmore through the forest past.

"Wake ye from your sleep of death,
Minstrels and bards of other days!
For the midnight wind is on the heath,
And the midnight meteors dimly blaze:
The Spectre with his Bloody Hand,†
Is wandering through the wild woodland;
The owl and the raven are mute for dread,
And the time is meet to awake the dead!

"Souls of the mighty, wake and say,
To what high strain your harps were strung,
When Lochlin plow'd her billowy way,
And on your shores her Norsemen flung?
Her Norsemen train'd to spoil and blood,
Skill'd to prepare the raven's food,
All, by your harpings, doom'd to die
On bloody Largs and Loncarty.‡

"Mute are ye all? No murmurs strange
Upon the midnight breeze sail by;
Nor through the pines, with whistling change
Mimic the harp's wild harmony!
Mute are ye now?—Ye ne'er were mute,
When Murder with his bloody foot,
And Rapine with his iron hand,
Were hovering near yon mountain strand.

"O yet awake the strain to tell,
By every deed in song enroll'd,
By every chief who fought or fell,
For Albion's weal in battle bold:—
From Coilgach,§ first who roll'd his car
Through the deep ranks of Roman war,
To him, of veteran memory dear,
Who victor died on Aboukir.

"By all their swords, by all their scars,
By all their names, a mighty spell!
By all their wounds, by all their wars,
Arise, the mighty strain to tell!
For fiercer than fierce Hengist's strain,
More impious than the heathen Dane,
More grasping than all-grasping Rome,
Gaul's ravening legions hither come!"—
The wind is hush'd, and still the lake—
Strange murmurs fill my tingling ears,
Bristles my hair, my sinews quake,
At the dread voice of other years—
"When targets clash'd, and bugles rung,
And blades round warriors' heads were flung,
The foremost of the band were we,
And hymn'd the joys of Liberty!"

† The forest of Glenmore is haunted by a spirit called Lhamdearg, or Red-hand.

‡ Where the Norwegian invader of Scotland received two bloody defeats.

§ The Galgacus of Tacitus.

HELVELLYN.

[1805.]

In the spring of 1805, a young gentleman of talents, and of a most amiable disposition, perished by losing his way on the mountain Helvellyn. His remains were not discovered till three months afterwards, when they were found guarded by a faithful terrier-bitch, his constant attendant during frequent solitary rambles through the wilds of Cumberland and Westmoreland.

I CLIMB'D the dark brow of the mighty Helvellyn,
Lakes and mountains beneath me gleam'd misty and wide;
All was still, save by fits, when the eagle was yelling, [plied.
And starting around me the echoes re-
On the right, Striden-edge round the Red-tarn was bending, [fending,
And Catchedicam its left verge was de-
One huge nameless rock in the front was ascending,
When I marked the sad spot where the wanderer had died.

Dark green was that spot 'mid the brown mountain-heather,
Where the Pilgrim of Nature lay stretch'd in decay,
Like the corpse of an outcast abandon'd to weather, [tenantless clay.
Till the mountain-winds wasted the
Nor yet quite deserted, though lonely extended, [attended,
For, faithful in death, his mute favourite
The much-loved remains of her master defended, [away.
And chased the hill-fox and the raven

How long didst thou think that his silence was slumber?
When the wind waved his garment, how oft didst thou start?
How many long days and long weeks didst thou number, [thy heart?
Ere he faded before thee, the friend of
And, oh! was it meet, that—no requiem read o'er him— [plore him,
No mother to weep, and no friend to de-
And thou, little guardian, alone stretch'd before him—
Unhonour'd the Pilgrim from life should depart?

When a Prince to the fate of the Peasant has yielded, [lighted hall;
The tapestry waves dark round the dim-
With scutcheons of silver the coffin is shielded, [pall:
And pages stand mute by the canopied

Through the courts, at deep midnight, the torches are gleaming; [are beaming;
In the proudly-arch'd chapel the banners
Far adown the long aisle sacred music is streaming, [fall.
Lamenting a Chief of the people should

But meeter for thee, gentle lover of nature, [mountain lamb,
To lay down thy head like the meek
When, wilder'd, he drops from some cliff huge in stature, [dam.
And draws his last sob by the side of his
And more stately thy couch by this desert lake lying, [flying,
Thy obsequies sung by the grey plover
With one faithful friend but to witness thy dying, [dicam.
In the arms of Helvellyn and Catche-

THE DYING BARD.

[1806.]

AIR—*Daffydz Gangwen.*

The Welsh tradition bears, that a Bard, on his death-bed, demanded his harp, and played the air to which these verses are adapted; requesting that it might be performed at his funeral.

I.

DINAS EMLINN, lament; for the moment is nigh, [shall die:
When mute in the woodlands thine echoes
No more by sweet Teivi Cadwallon shall rave, [dashing wave.
And mix his wild notes with the wild

II.

In spring and in autumn thy glories of shade [shall fade;
Unhonour'd shall flourish, unhonour'd
For soon shall be lifeless the eye and the tongue, [rapture, that sung.
That view'd them with rapture, with

III.

Thy sons, Dinas Emlinn, may march in their pride, [tatyn's side;
And chase the proud Saxon from Pres-
But where is the harp shall give life to their name? their fame?
And where is the bard shall give heroes

IV.

And oh, Dinas Emlinn! thy daughters so fair, [dark hair;
Who heave the white bosom, and wave the
What tuneful enthusiast shall worship their eye, shall die?
When half of their charms with Cadwallon

V.

Then adieu, silver Teivi! I quit thy loved scene, [have been;
To join the dim choir of the bards who

With Lewarch, and Meilor, and Merlin the Old,
And sage Taliessin, high harping to hold.

VI.

And adieu, Dinas Emlinn! still green be thy shades, [thy maids!
Unconquer'd thy warriors, and matchless
And thou, whose faint warblings my weakness can tell, [farewell!
Farewell, my loved Harp! my last treasure,

THE NORMAN HORSE-SHOE.

[1806.]

AIR—*The War-Song of the Men of Glamorgan.*

The Welsh, inhabiting a mountainous country, and possessing only an inferior breed of horses, were usually unable to encounter the shock of the Anglo-Norman cavalry. Occasionally, however, they were successful in repelling the invaders; and the following verses are supposed to celebrate a defeat of CLARE, Earl of Striguil and Pembroke, and of NEVILLE, Baron of Chepstow, Lords-Marchers of Monmouthshire. Rymny is a stream which divides the counties of Monmouth and Glamorgan: Caerphili, the scene of the supposed battle, is a vale upon its banks, dignified by the ruins of a very ancient castle.

I.

RED glows the forge in Striguil's bounds,
And hammers din, and anvil sounds,
And armourers, with iron toil,
Barb many a steed for battle's broil.
Foul fall the hand which bends the steel
Around the courser's thundering heel,
That e'er shall dint a sable wound
On fair Glamorgan's velvet ground!

II.

From Chepstow's towers, ere dawn of morn,
Was heard afar the bugle horn;
And forth, in banded pomp and pride,
Stout Clare and fiery Neville ride. [gleam,
They swore their banners broad should
In crimson light, on Rymny's stream;
They vow'd, Caerphili's sod should feel
The Norman charger's spurning heel.

III.

And sooth they swore—the sun arose,
And Rymny's wave with crimson glows;
For Clare's red banner, floating wide,
Roll'd down the stream to Severn's tide!
And sooth they vow'd—the trampled green
Show'd where hot Neville's charge had
In every sable hoof-tramp stood [been:
A Norman horseman's curdling blood!

IV.

Old Chepstow's brides may curse the toil,
That arm'd stout Clare for Cambrian broil;
Their orphans long the art may rue,
For Neville's war-horse forged the shoe.
No more the stamp of armèd steed
Shall dint Glamorgan's velvet mead;
Nor trace be there, in early spring,
Save of the Fairies' emerald ring.

THE MAID OF TORO.

[1806.]

O, LOW shone the sun on the fair lake of Toro, [the dark wood,
And weak were the whispers that waved
All as a fair maiden, bewilder'd in sorrow,
Sorely sigh'd to the breezes, and wept to the flood. [lowly bending;
"O saints! from the mansions of bliss
Sweet Virgin! who hearest the suppliant's cry, [ing,
Now grant my petition, in anguish ascend-
My Henry restore, or let Eleanor die!"

All distant and faint were the sounds of the battle, [breezes they fail,
With the breezes they rise, with the
Till the shout, and the groan, and the conflict's dread rattle,
And the chase's wild clamour, came loading the gale. [dreary;
Breathless she gazed on the woodlands so
Slowly approaching a warrior was seen;
Life's ebbing tide mark'd his footsteps so weary, [mien.
Cleft was his helmet, and woe was his

"O, save thee, fair maid, for our armies are flying! [is low!
O, save thee, fair maid, for thy guardian
Deadly cold on yon heath thy brave Henry is lying, [proaches the foe."
And fast through the woodland ap-
Scarce could he falter the tidings of sorrow,
And scarce could she hear them, benumb'd with despair: [of Toro,
And when the sun sunk on the sweet lake
For ever he set to the Brave and the Fair.

THE PALMER.

[1806.]

"O, OPEN the door, some pity to show,
Keen blows the northern wind!
The glen is white with the drifted snow,
And the path is hard to find.

"No outlaw seeks your castle gate,
From chasing the King's deer,
Though even an outlaw's wretched state
Might claim compassion here.

"A weary Palmer, worn and weak,
I wander for my sin;
O, open, for Our Lady's sake!
A pilgrim's blessing win!

"I'll give you pardons from the Pope,
And reliques from o'er the sea;—
Or if for these you will not ope,
Yet open for charity.

"The hare is crouching in her form,
The hart beside the hind;
An aged man, amid the storm,
No shelter can I find.

"You hear the Ettrick's sullen roar,
Dark, deep, and strong is he,
And I must ford the Ettrick o'er,
Unless you pity me.

"The iron gate is bolted hard,
At which I knock in vain;
The owner's heart is closer barr'd,
Who hears me thus complain.

"Farewell, farewell! and Mary grant,
When old and frail you be,
You never may the shelter want,
That's now denied to me."

The Ranger on his couch lay warm,
And heard him plead in vain;
But oft amid December's storm,
He'll hear that voice again:

For lo, when through the vapours dank,
Morn shone on Ettrick fair,
A corpse amid the alders rank,
The Palmer welter'd there.

THE MAID OF NEIDPATH.

[1806.]

THERE is a tradition in Tweeddale, that, when Neidpath Castle, near Peebles, was inhabited by the Earls of March, a mutual passion subsisted between a daughter of that noble family and a son of the Laird of Tushielaw, in Ettrick Forest. As the alliance was thought unsuitable by her parents, the young man went abroad. During his absence, the lady fell into a consumption; and at length, as the only means of saving her life, her father consented that her lover should be recalled. On the day when he was expected to pass through Peebles, on the road to Tushielaw, the young lady, though much exhausted, caused herself to be carried to the balcony of a house in Peebles, belonging to the family, that she might see him as he rode past. Her anxiety and eagerness gave such force to her organs, that she is said to have distinguished his horse's footsteps at an incredible distance. But Tushielaw, unprepared for the change in her appearance, and not expecting to see her in that place, rode on without recognising her, or even slackening his pace. The lady was unable to support the shock; and, after a short struggle, died in the arms of her attendants. There is an incident similar to this traditional tale in Count Hamilton's "Fleur d'Epine."

O, LOVERS' eyes are sharp to see,
And lovers' ears in hearing;
And love, in life's extremity,
Can lend an hour of cheering.
Disease had been in Mary's bower,
And slow decay from mourning,
Though now she sits on Neidpath's tower,
To watch her love's returning.

All sunk and dim her eyes so bright,
Her form decay'd by pining,
Till through her wasted hand, at night,
You saw the taper shining;
By fits, a sultry hectic hue
Across her cheek was flying;
By fits, so ashy pale she grew,
Her maidens thought her dying.

Yet keenest powers to see and hear,
Seem'd in her frame residing;
Before the watch-dog prick'd his ear,
She heard her lover's riding;
Ere scarce a distant form was kenn'd,
She knew, and waved to greet him;
And o'er the battlement did bend,
As on the wing to meet him.

He came—he pass'd—a heedless gaze,
As o'er some stranger glancing;
Her welcome, spoke in faltering phrase,
Lost in his courser's prancing—
The castle arch, whose hollow tone
Returns each whisper spoken,
Could scarcely catch the feeble moan,
Which told her heart was broken.

WANDERING WILLIE.

[1806.]

ALL joy was bereft me the day that you left me,
And climb'd the tall vessel to sail yon wide sea;
O weary betide it! I wander'd beside it,
And bann'd it for parting my Willie and me.

Far o'er the wave hast thou follow'd thy fortune,
Oft fought the squadrons of France and of Spain;
Ae kiss of welcome's worth twenty at parting,
Now I hae gotten my Willie again.

When the sky it was mirk, and the winds they were wailing,
I sat on the beach wi' the tear in my ee,
And thought o' the bark where my Willie was sailing,
And wish'd that the tempest could a' blaw on me.

Now that thy gallant ship rides at her mooring,
Now that my wanderer's in safety at hame,
Music to me were the wildest winds' roaring,
That e'er o'er Inch-Keith drove the dark ocean faem.

When the lights they did blaze, and the guns they did rattle, [victory,
And blithe was each heart for the great
In secret I wept for the dangers of battle,
And the glory itself was scarce comfort to me.

But now shalt thou tell, while I eagerly listen, [scar;
Of each bold adventure, and every brave
And trust me, I'll smile, though my een they may glisten; [war.
For sweet after danger's the tale of the

And oh, how we doubt when there's distance 'tween lovers,
When there's naething to speak to the heart thro' the ee; [rovers,
How often the kindest and warmest prove
And the love of the faithfullest ebbs like the sea.

Till, at times—could I help it?—I pined and I ponder'd [on the tree—
If love could change notes like the bird
Now I'll ne'er ask if thine eyes may hae wander'd, [stant to me.
Enough, thy leal heart has been con-

Welcome from sweeping o'er sea and through channel, [fame,
Hardships and danger despising for
Furnishing story for glory's bright annal,
Welcome, my wanderer, to Jeanie and hame!

Enough, now thy story in annals of glory
Has humbled the pride of France, Holland, and Spain;
No more shalt thou grieve me, no more shalt thou leave me,
I never will part with my Willie again.

HUNTING SONG.

[1808.]

WAKEN, lords and ladies gay,
On the mountain dawns the day,
All the jolly chase is here,
With hawk, and horse, and hunting-spear!
Hounds are in their couples yelling,
Hawks are whistling, horns are knelling,
Merrily, merrily, mingle they,
"Waken, lords and ladies gay."

Waken, lords and ladies gay,
The mist has left the mountain grey,
Springlets in the dawn are steaming,
Diamonds on the brake are gleaming:
And foresters have busy been,
To track the buck in thicket green;
Now we come to chant our lay,
"Waken, lords and ladies gay."

Waken, lords and ladies gay,
To the greenwood haste away;
We can show you where he lies,
Fleet of foot, and tall of size;
We can show the marks he made,
When 'gainst the oak his antlers fray'd;
You shall see him brought to bay,
"Waken, lords and ladies gay."

Louder, louder chant the lay,
Waken, lords and ladies gay!
Tell them youth, and mirth, and glee,
Run a course as well as we;
Time, stern huntsman! who can baulk,
Staunch as hound, and fleet as hawk;
Think of this, and rise with day,
Gentle lords and ladies gay.

HEALTH TO LORD MELVILLE.

[1806.]

AIR—*Carrickfergus.*

SINCE here we are set in array round the table, [hall,
Five hundred good fellows well met in a
Come listen, brave boys, and I'll sing as I'm able, [got a fall.
How innocence triumph'd, and pride
But push round the claret—
Come, stewards, don't spare it—
With rapture you'll drink to the toast that I give:
Here, boys,
Off with it merrily—
MELVILLE for ever, and long may he live!

What were the Whigs doing, when boldly pursuing, [a string?
PITT banish'd Rebellion, gave Treason
Why, they swore on their honour, for ARTHUR O'CONNOR,
And fought hard for DESPARD against country and king.
Well, then, we knew, boys,
PITT and MELVILLE were true boys,
And the tempest was raised by the friends
Ah, woe! [of Reform.
Weep to his memory;
Low lies the Pilot that weather'd the storm!

And pray, don't you mind when the Blues first were raising,
And we scarcely could think the house safe o'er our heads?
When villains and coxcombs, French politics praising, [from our beds?
Drove peace from our tables and sleep
Our hearts they grew bolder
When, musket on shoulder,
Stepp'd forth our old Statesman example
Come, boys, never fear, [to give.
Drink the Blue Grenadier—
Here's to old HARRY, and long may he live!

They would turn us adrift; though rely, sir, upon it— [that
Our own faithful chronicles warrant us
The free mountaineer and his bonny blue bonnet
Have oft gone as far as the regular's hat.
We laugh at their taunting,
For all we are wanting
Is licence our life for our country to give.
Off with it merrily,
Horse, foot, and artillery,
Each loyal Volunteer, long may he live!

'Tis not us alone, boys—the Army and Navy [pranks;
Have each got a slap 'mid their politic
CORNWALLIS cashier'd, that watch'd winters to save ye, [of thanks.
And the Cape call'd a bauble, unworthy
But vain is their taunt;
No soldier shall want [give;
The thanks that his country to valour can
Come, boys,
Drink it off merrily,— [they live!
SIR DAVID and POPHAM, and long may

And then our revenue—Lord knows how they view'd it, [and big;
While each petty statesman talked lofty
But the beer-tax was weak, as if Whitbread had brew'd it,
And the pig-iron duty a shame to a pig.
In vain is their vaunting;
Too surely there's wanting
What judgment, experience, and steadi-
Come, boys, [ness give:
Drink about merrily,—
Health to sage MELVILLE, and long may he live!

Our King, too—our Princess—I dare not say more, sir,— [and might?
May Providence watch them with mercy
While there's one Scottish hand that can wag a claymore, sir,
They shall ne'er want a friend to stand up for their right.
Be damn'd he that dare not,—
For my part, I'll spare not
To beauty afflicted a tribute to give:
Fill it up steadily,
Drink it off readily— [live!
Here's to the Princess, and long may she

And since we must not set Auld Reekie in glory, [her heart;
And make her brown visage as light as
Till each man illumine his own upper story,
Nor law-book nor lawyer shall force us to part.
In GRENVILLE and SPENCER,
And some few good men, sir,
High talents we honour, slight difference forgive;
But the Brewer we'll hoax,
Tallyho to the Fox, [we live!
And drink MELVILLE for ever, as long as

EPITAPH,

Designed for a monument in Lichfield Cathedral, at the burial-place of the family of Miss Seward.

AMID these aisles, where once his precepts show'd [trod,
The Heavenward pathway which in life he
This simple tablet marks a Father's bier,
And those he loved in life, in death are near;
For him, for them, a daughter bade it rise,
Memorial of domestic charities.
Still wouldst thou know why, o'er the marble spread, [head;
In female grace the willow droops her
Why on her branches, silent and unstrung,
The minstrel harp is emblematic hung;
What poet's voice is smother'd here in dust,
Till waked to join the chorus of the just,——
Lo! one brief line an answer sad supplies,
Honour'd, beloved, and mourn'd, here SEWARD lies! [ship say,—
Her worth, her warmth of heart, let friend-
Go seek her genius in her living lay.

THE RESOLVE.

IN IMITATION OF AN OLD ENGLISH POEM.

Published in the "Edinburgh Annual Register" of 1808.

My wayward fate I needs must plain,
Though bootless be the theme:
I loved, and was beloved again,
Yet all was but a dream;
For, as her love was quickly got,
So it was quickly gone;
No more I'll bask in flame so hot,
But coldly dwell alone.

Not maid more bright than maid was e'er
My fancy shall beguile,
By flattering word or feigned tear,
By gesture, look, or smile:
No more I'll call the shaft fair shot
Till it has fairly flown,
Nor scorch me at a flame so hot;—
I'll rather freeze alone.

Each ambush'd Cupid I'll defy,
In cheek, or chin, or brow,
And deem the glance of woman's eye
As weak as woman's vow:

I'll lightly hold the lady's heart,
That is but lightly won;
I'll steel my breast to beauty's art,
And learn to live alone.

The flaunting torch soon blazes out,
The diamond's ray abides;
The flame its glory hurls about,
The gem its lustre hides:
Such gem I fondly deem'd was mine,
And glow'd a diamond stone,
But, since each eye may see it shine,
I'll darkling dwell alone.

No waking dream shall tinge my thought
With dyes so bright and vain;
No silken net, so slightly wrought,
Shall tangle me again:
No more I'll pay so dear for wit,
I'll live upon mine own;
Nor shall wild passion trouble it,—
I'll rather dwell alone.

And thus I'll hush my heart to rest,—
"Thy loving labour's lost;
Thou shalt no more be wildly blest,
To be so strangely crost:
The widow'd turtles mateless die,
The phœnix is but one;
They seek no loves—no more will I—
I'll rather dwell alone."

PROLOGUE

TO MISS BAILLIE'S PLAY OF THE FAMILY LEGEND.

[1809.]

'Tis sweet to hear expiring Summer's sigh,
Through forests tinged with russet, wail and die;
'Tis sweet and sad the latest notes to hear
Of distant music, dying on the ear;
But far more sadly sweet, on foreign strand,
We list the legends of our native land,
Link'd as they come with every tender tie,
Memorials dear of youth and infancy.

Chief, thy wild tales, romantic Caledon,
Wake keen remembrance in each hardy son.
Whether on India's burning coasts he toil,
Or till Acadia's winter-fetter'd soil,
He hears with throbbing heart and moisten'd eyes,
And, as he hears, what dear illusions rise!
It opens on his soul his native dell,
The woods wild waving, and the water's swell; [the plain,
Tradition's theme, the tower that threats
The mossy cairn that hides the hero slain;
The cot, beneath whose simple porch were told,
By grey-hair'd patriarch, the tales of old,
The infant group, that hush'd their sports the while, [smile.
And the dear maid who listen'd with a
The wanderer, while the vision warms his brain,
Is denizen of Scotland once again.

Are such keen feelings to the crowd confined,
And sleep they in the Poet's gifted mind?
Oh no! For She, within whose mighty page [rage,
Each tyrant Passion shows his woe and
Has felt the wizard influence they inspire,
And to your own traditions tuned her lyre.
Yourselves shall judge—whoe'er has raised the sail [ing's tale.
By Mull's dark coast, has heard this even-
The plaided boatman, resting on his oar,
Points to the fatal rock amid the roar
Of whitening waves, and tells whate'er to-night
Our humble stage shall offer to your sight;
Proudly preferr'd that first our efforts give
Scenes glowing from her pen to breathe and live;
More proudly yet, should Caledon approve
The filial token of a Daughter's love.

THE POACHER.

Written in imitation of Crabbe, and published in the "Edinburgh Annual Register" of 1809.

Welcome, grave Stranger, to our green retreats, [meets;
Where health with exercise and freedom
Thrice welcome, Sage, whose philosophic plan
By nature's limits metes the rights of man!
Generous as he, who now for freedom bawls, [shawls:
Now gives full value for true Indian
O'er court, o'er customhouse, his shoe who flings, [kings!
Now bilks excisemen, and now bullies
Like his, I ween, thy comprehensive mind
Holds laws as mouse-traps baited for mankind;
Thine eye, applausive, each sly vermin sees,
That baulks the snare, yet battens on the cheese? [awe,
Thine ear has heard, with scorn instead of
Our buck-skinn'd justices expound the law,
Wire-draw the acts that fix for wires the pain, [swain;
And for the netted partridge noose the

And thy vindictive arm would fain have broke
The last light fetter of the feudal yoke,
To give the denizens of wood and wild,
Nature's free race, to each her free-born child. [London's race
Hence hast thou mark'd, with grief, fair
Mock'd with the boon of one poor Easter chase, [when
And long'd to send them forth as free as
Pour'd o'er Chantilly the Parisian train,
When musket, pistol, blunderbuss, combined, [hind!
And scarce the field-pieces were left be-
A squadron's charge each leveret's heart dismay'd,
On every covey fired a bold brigade;
La Douce Humanité approved the sport,
For great the alarm indeed, yet small the hurt;
Shouts patriotic solemnised the day,
And Seine re-echo'd *Vive la Liberté!*
But mad *Citoyen*, meek *Monsieur* again,
With some few added links resumes his chain. [are known,
Then, since such scenes to France no more
Come, view with me a hero of thine own!
One, whose free actions vindicate the cause
Of sylvan liberty o'er feudal laws.

Seek we yon glades, where the proud oak o'ertops
Wide-waving seas of birch and hazel copse,
Leaving between deserted isles of land,
Where stunted heath is patch'd with ruddy sand;
And lonely on the waste the yew is seen,
Or straggling hollies spread a brighter green. [steep,
Here, little worn, and winding dark and
Our scarce mark'd path descends yon dingle deep:
Follow—but heedful, cautious of a trip,—
In earthly mire philosophy may slip.
Step slow and wary o'er that swampy stream, [steam,
Till, guided by the charcoal's smothering
We reach the frail yet barricaded door
Of hovel form'd for poorest of the poor;
No hearth the fire, no vent the smoke receives, [leaves;
The walls are wattles, and the covering
For, if such hut, our forest statutes say,
Rise in the progress of one night and day
(Though placed where still the Conqueror's hests o'erawe, [law),
And his son's stirrup shines the badge of
The builder claims the unenviable boon,
To tenant dwelling, framed as slight and soon
As wigwam wild, that shrouds the native frore
On the bleak coast of frost-barr'd Labrador.

Approach, and through the unlatticed window peep—
Nay, shrink not back, the inmate is asleep;
Sunk mid yon sordid blankets, till the sun
Stoop to the west, the plunderer's toils are done. [perate hand,
Loaded and primed, and prompt for des-
Rifle and fowling-piece beside him stand;
While round the hut are in disorder laid
The tools and booty of his lawless trade;
For force or fraud, resistance or escape,
The crow, the saw, the bludgeon, and the crape.
His pilfer'd powder in yon nook he hoards,
And the filch'd lead the church's roof affords—
(Hence shall the rector's congregation fret,
That while his sermon's dry his walls are wet.) [there,
The fish-spear barb'd, the sweeping net are
Doe-hides, and pheasant plumes, and skins of hare,
Cordage for toils, and wiring for the snare.
Barter'd for game from chase or warren won, [moon was none;
Yon cask holds moonlight,† run when
And late-snatch'd spoils lie stow'd in hutch, apart,
To wait the associate higgler's evening cart.

Look on his pallet foul, and mark his rest: [breast!
What scenes perturb'd are acting in his
His sable brow is wet and wrung with pain,
And his dilated nostril toils in vain;
For short and scant the breath each effort draws, [pause.
And 'twixt each effort Nature claims a
Beyond the loose and sable neckcloth stretch'd, [twitch'd,
His sinewy throat seems by convulsion
While the tongue falters, as to utterance loath, [and oath.
Sounds of dire import—watchword, threat,
Though, stupefied by toil, and drugg'd with gin,
The body sleep, the restless guest within
Now plies on wood and wold his lawless trade, [may'd.—
Now in the fangs of justice wakes dis-

"Was that wild start of terror and despair, [air,
Those bursting eyeballs, and that wilder'd
Sings of compunction for a murder'd hare?

† A cant term for smuggled spirits.

Do the locks bristle and the eyebrows arch,
For grouse or partridge massacred in March?"

No, scoffer, no! Attend, and mark with awe,
There is no wicket in the gate of law!
He, that would e'er so lightly set ajar
That awful portal, must undo each bar:
Tempting occasion, habit, passion, pride,
Will join to storm the breach, and force the barrier wide.

That ruffian, whom true men avoid and dread, [Black Ned,
Whom bruisers, poachers, smugglers, call
Was Edward Mansell once;—the lightest heart
That ever play'd on holiday his part!
The leader he in every Christmas game,
The harvest-feast grew blither when he came, [glance,
And liveliest on the chords the bow did
When Edward named the tune and led the dance. [strong,
Kind was his heart, his passions quick and
Hearty his laugh, and jovial was his song;
And if he loved a gun, his father swore,
"'Twas but a trick of youth would soon be o'er, [years before."
Himself had done the same some thirty

But he whose humours spurn law's awful yoke, are broke.
Must herd with those by whom law's bonds
The common dread of justice soon allies
The clown, who robs the warren or excise, [dread,
With sterner felons train'd to act more
Even with the wretch by whom his fellow bled. [pass,
Then,—as in plagues the foul contagions
Leavening and festering the corrupted mass,— motives draw,
Guilt leagues with guilt, while mutual
Their hope impunity, their fear the law;
Their foes, their friends, their rendezvous the same,
Till the revenue baulk'd, or pilfer'd game,
Flesh the young culprit, and example leads
To darker villainy and direr deeds.

Wild howl'd the wind the forest glades along,
And oft the owl renew'd her dismal song;
Around the spot where erst he felt the wound, [round.
Red William's spectre walk'd his midnight
When o'er the swamp he cast his blighting look,
From the green marshes of the stagnant brook
The bittern's sullen shout the sedges shook! [gleam,
The waning moon, with storm-presaging
Now gave and now withheld her doubtful beam; [them high,
The old Oak stoop'd his arms, then flung
Bellowing and groaning to the troubled sky— [wood sere,
'Twas then, that, couch'd amid the brush-
In Malwood-walk young Mansell watch'd the deer:
The fattest buck received his deadly shot—
The watchful keeper heard, and sought the spot. [their strife,
Stout were their hearts, and stubborn was
O'erpower'd at length the Outlaw drew his knife! [fell—
Next morn a corpse was found upon the
The rest his waking agony may tell!

SONG.

Oh, say not, my love, with that mortified air, [flown,
That your spring-time of pleasure is
Nor bid me to maids that are younger repair, [own.
For those raptures that still are thine

Though April his temples may wreathe with the vine,
Its tendrils in infancy curl'd, [wine,
'Tis the ardour of August matures us the
Whose life-blood enlivens the world.

Though thy form, that was fashion'd as light as a fay's,
Has assumed a proportion more round,
And thy glance, that was bright as a falcon's at gaze,
Looks soberly now on the ground,—

Enough, after absence to meet me again,
Thy steps still with ecstasy move;
Enough, that those dear sober glances retain
For me the kind language of love.

THE BOLD DRAGOON;

OR, THE PLAIN OF BADAJOS.

[1812.]

'Twas a Maréchal of France, and he fain would honour gain,
And he long'd to take a passing glance at Portugal from Spain;
With his flying guns this gallant gay,
And boasted corps d'armée—
O he fear'd not our dragoons, with their long swords, boldly riding,
Whack, fal de ral, &c.

To Campo Mayor come, he had quietly
sat down, [sack'd the town,
Just a fricassee to pick, while his soldiers
When, 'twas peste! morbleu! mon
Hear the English bugle-call! [General,
And behold the light dragoons, with their
long swords, boldly riding,
Whack, fal de ral, &c.

Right about went horse and foot, artillery
and all,
And, as the devil leaves a house, they
tumbled through the wall;
They took no time to seek the door,
But, best foot set before—
O they ran from our dragoons, with their
long swords, bolding riding,
Whack, fal de ral, &c.

Those valiant men of France they had
scarcely fled a mile,
When on their flank there soused at once
the British rank and file;
For Long, De Grey, and Otway, then
Ne'er minded one to ten,
But came on like light dragoons, with
their long swords, bolding riding,
Whack, fal de ral, &c.

Three hundred British lads they made
three thousand reel,
Their hearts were made of English oak,
their swords of Sheffield steel,
Their horses were in Yorkshire bred,
And Beresford them led;
So huzza for brave dragoons, with their
long swords, boldly riding,
Whack, fal de ral, &c.

Then here's a health to Wellington, to
Beresford, to Long,
And a single word of Bonaparte before I
close my song:
The eagles that to fight he brings
Should serve his men with wings,
When they meet the bold dragoons, with
their long swords, boldly riding,
Whack, fal de ral, &c.

ON THE MASSACRE OF GLENCOE.

[1814.]

"In the beginning of the year 1692, an action of unexampled barbarity disgraced the Government of King William III. in Scotland. In the August preceding, a proclamation had been issued, offering an indemnity to such insurgents as should take the oaths to the King and Queen on or before the last day of December; and the chiefs of such tribes as had been in arms for James soon after took advantage of the proclamation. But Macdonald of Glencoe was prevented by accident, rather than by design, from tendering his submission within the limited time. In the end of December he went to Colonel Hill, who commanded the garrison in Fort-William, to take the oaths of allegiance to the Government; and the latter having furnished him with a letter to Sir Colin Campbell, sheriff of the county of Argyle, directed him to repair immediately to Inverary, to make his submission in a legal manner before that magistrate. But the way to Inverary lay through almost impassable mountains, the season was extremely rigorous, and the whole country was covered with a deep snow. So eager, however, was Macdonald to take the oaths before the limited time should expire, that, though the road lay within half-a-mile of his own house, he stopped not to visit his family, and, after various obstructions, arrived at Inverary. The time had elapsed, and the sheriff hesitated to receive his submission; but Macdonald prevailed by his importunities, and even tears, in inducing that functionary to administer to him the oath of allegiance, and to certify the cause of his delay. At this time Sir John Dalrymple, afterwards Earl of Stair, being in attendance upon William as Secretary of State for Scotland, took advantage of Macdonald's neglecting to take the oath within the time prescribed, and procured from the king a warrant of military execution against that chief and his whole clan. This was done at the instigation of the Earl of Breadalbane, whose lands the Glencoe men had plundered, and whose treachery to Government, in negotiating with the Highland clans, Macdonald himself had exposed. The King was accordingly persuaded that Glencoe was the main obstacle to the pacification of the Highlands; and the fact of the unfortunate chief's submission having been concealed, the sanguinary orders for proceeding to military execution against his clan were in consequence obtained. The warrant was both signed and countersigned by the King's own hand, and the Secretary urged the officers who commanded in the Highlands to execute their orders with the utmost rigour. Campbell of Glenlyon, a captain in Argyll's regiment, and two subalterns, were ordered to repair to Glencoe on the first of February with a hundred and twenty men. Campbell, being uncle to young Macdonald's wife, was received by the father with all manner of friendship and hospitality. The men were lodged at free quarters in the houses of his tenants, and received the kindest entertainment. Till the 13th of the month the troops lived in the utmost harmony and familiarity with the people; and on the very night of the massacre the officers passed the evening at cards in Macdonald's house. In the night, Lieutenant Lindsay, with a party of soldiers, called in a friendly manner at his door, and was instantly admitted. Macdonald, while in the act of rising to receive his guest, was shot dead through the back with two bullets. His wife had already dressed; but she was stripped naked by the soldiers, who tore the rings off her fingers with their teeth. The slaughter now became general, and neither age nor infirmity was spared. Some women, in

defending their children, were killed; boys imploring mercy were shot dead by officers on whose knees they hung. In one place nine persons, as they sat enjoying themselves at table, were butchered by the soldiers. In Inverriggon, Campbell's own quarters, nine men were first bound by the soldiers, and then shot at intervals, one by one. Nearly forty persons were massacred by the troops; and several who fled to the mountains perished by famine and the inclemency of the season. Those who escaped owed their lives to a tempestuous night. Lieutenant-Colonel Hamilton, who had received the charge of the execution from Dalrymple, was on his march with four hundred men to guard all the passes from the valley of Glencoe; but he was obliged to stop by the severity of the weather, which proved the safety of the unfortunate clan. Next day he entered the valley, laid the houses in ashes, and carried away the cattle and spoil, which were divided among the officers and soldiers."—*Article* "BRITAIN;" *Encyc. Britannica.*

"O TELL me, Harper, wherefore flow
Thy wayward notes of wail and woe
Far down the desert of Glencoe,
Where none may list their melody?
Say, harp'st thou to the mists that fly,
Or to the dun-deer glancing by,
Or to the eagle that from high
Screams chorus to thy minstrelsy?"—

"No, not to these, for they have rest,—
The mist-wreath has the mountain-crest,
The stag his lair, the erne her nest,
Abode of lone security.
But those for whom I pour the lay,
Not wild-wood deep, nor mountain grey,
Not this deep dell, that shrouds from day,
Could screen from treach'rous cruelty.

"Their flag was furl'd, and mute their drum,
The very household dogs were dumb,
Unwont to bay at guests that come
In guise of hospitality.
His blithest notes the piper plied,
Her gayest snood the maiden tied,
The dame her distaff flung aside,
To tend her kindly housewifery.

"The hand that mingled in the meal,
At midnight drew the felon steel,
And gave the host's kind breast to feel
Meed for his hospitality!
The friendly hearth which warm'd that hand,
At midnight arm'd it with the brand,
That bade destruction's flames expand
Their red and fearful blazonry.

"Then woman's shriek was heard in vain,
Nor infancy's unpitied plain,
More than the warrior's groan, could gain
Respite from ruthless butchery!
The winter wind that whistled shrill,
The snows that night that cloked the hill,
Though wild and pitiless, had still
Far more than Southron clemency.

"Long have my harp's best notes been gone,
Few are its strings, and faint their tone,
They can but sound in desert lone
Their grey-hair'd master's misery.
Were each grey hair a minstrel string,
Each chord should imprecations fling,
Till startled Scotland loud should ring,
'Revenge for blood and treachery!'"

FOR A' THAT AN' A' THAT.

A NEW SONG TO AN OLD TUNE.

[1814.]

THOUGH right be aft put down by strength,
As mony a day we saw that,
The true and leilfu' cause at length
Shall bear the grie for a' that.
For a' that an' a' that,
Guns, guillotines, and a' that,
The Fleur-de-lis, that lost her right,
Is queen again for a' that!

We'll twine her in a friendly knot
With England's Rose, and a' that;
The Shamrock shall not be forgot,
For Wellington made braw that.
The Thistle, though her leaf be rude,
Yet faith we'll no misca' that,
She shelter'd in her solitude
The Fleur-de-lis, for a' that.

The Austrian Vine, the Prussian Pine
(For Blucher's sake, hurra that),
The Spanish Olive, too, shall join,
And bloom in peace for a' that.
Stout Russia's Hemp, so surely twined
Around our wreath we'll draw that,
And he that would the cord unbind,
Shall have it for his cra-vat!

Or, if to choke sae puir a sot,
Your pity scorn to thraw that,
The Devil's elbow be his lot,
Where he may sit and claw that.
In spite of slight, in spite of might,
In spite of brags, an' a' that,
The lads that battled for the right
Have won the day, an' a' that!

There's ae bit spot I had forgot,
America they ca' that;
A coward plot her rats had got
Their father's flag to gnaw that:
Now see it fly top-gallant high,
Atlantic winds shall blaw that,

And Yankee loon, beware your croun,
There's kames in hand to claw that!

For on the land, or on the sea,
Where'er the breezes blaw that,
The British Flag shall bear the grie,
And win the day for a' that!

SONG,

FOR THE ANNIVERSARY MEETING OF THE PITT CLUB OF SCOTLAND.

[1814.]

O, DREAD was the time, and more dreadful the omen, [slaughter'd in vain,
When the brave on Marengo lay
And beholding broad Europe bow'd down by her foemen, [her reign!
PITT closed in his anguish the map of
Not the fate of broad Europe could bend his brave spirit [shame;
To take for his country the safety of
O, then in her triumph remember his merit,
And hallow the goblet that flows to his name.

Round the husbandman's head while he traces the furrow, [rain,
The mists of the winter may mingle with
He may plough it with labour, and sow it in sorrow, [in vain;
And sigh while he fears he has sow'd it
He may die ere his children shall reap in their gladness, [member his claim;
But the blithe harvest home shall re-
And their jubilee-shout shall be soften'd with sadness, [to his name.
While they hallow the goblet that flows

Though anxious and timeless his life was expended, [care,
In toils for our country preserved by his
Though he died ere one ray o'er the nations ascended, [despair;
To light the long darkness of doubt and
The storms he endured in our Britain's December, [came,
The perils his wisdom foresaw and o'er-
In her glory's rich harvest shall Britain remember, [name.
And hallow the goblet that flows to his

Nor forget his grey head, who, all dark in affliction,
Is deaf to the tale of our victories won,
And to sounds the most dear to paternal affection, [Son;
The shout of his people applauding his
By his firmness unmoved in success and disaster, [his claim!
By his long reign of virtue, remember
With our tribute to PITT join the praise of his Master, [to his name.
Though a tear stain the goblet that flows

Yet again fill the wine cup, and change the sad measure, [paid,
The rites of our grief and our gratitude
To our Prince, to our Heroes, devote the bright treasure, [that obey'd!
The wisdom that plann'd, and the zeal
Fill WELLINGTON'S cup till it beam like his glory, [and GRÆME;
Forget not our own brave DALHOUSIE
A thousand years hence hearts shall bound at their story, [fame.
And hallow the goblet that flows to their

LINES,

ADDRESSED TO RANALD M'DONALD, ESQ. OF STAFFA.

[1814.]

STAFFA, sprung from high Macdonald,
Worthy branch of old Clan-Ranald!
Staffa! king of all kind fellows!
Well befall thy hills and valleys,
Lakes and inlets, deeps and shallows—
Cliffs of darkness, caves of wonder,
Echoing the Atlantic thunder;
Mountains which the grey mist covers,
Where the Chieftain spirit hovers,
Pausing while his pinions quiver,
Stretch'd to quit our land for ever!
Each kind influence reign above thee!
Warmer heart, 'twixt this and Staffa,
Beats not, than in heart of Staffa!

FAREWELL TO MACKENZIE,

HIGH CHIEF OF KINTAIL.

From the Gaelic.

[1815.]

The original verses are arranged to a beautiful Gaelic air, of which the chorus is adapted to the double pull upon the oars of a galley, and which is therefore distinct from the ordinary jorrams, or boat-songs. They were composed by the Family Bard upon the departure of the Earl of Seaforth, who was obliged to take refuge in Spain, after an unsuccessful effort at insurrection in favour of the Stuart family, in the year 1718.

FAREWELL to Mackenneth, great Earl of the North, [Seaforth;
The Lord of Lochcarron, Glenshiel, and
To the Chieftain this morning his course who began, [like a swan.
Launching forth on the billows his bark
For a far foreign land he has hoisted his sail: [Kintail!
Farewell to Mackenzie, High Chief of

O swift be the galley, and hardy her crew,
May her captain be skilful, her mariners true,
In danger undaunted, unwearied by toil,
Though the whirlwind should rise, and the ocean should boil: [bonail,†
On the brave vessel's gunnel I drank his
And farewell to Mackenzie, High Chief of Kintail!

Awake in thy chamber, thou sweet south-land gale! [on his sail;
Like the sighs of his people, breathe soft
Be prolong'd as regret, that his vassals must know, [woe:
Be fair as their faith, and sincere as their
Be so soft, and so fair, and so faithful, sweet gale, [of Kintail!
Wafting onward Mackenzie, High Chief

Be his pilot experienced, and trusty, and wise,
To measure the seas and to study the skies:
May he hoist all his canvas from streamer to deck, [back—
But O! crowd it higher when wafting him
Till the cliffs of Skooroora, and Conan's glad vale, [Kintail!
Shall welcome Mackenzie, High Chief of

WAR-SONG OF LACHLAN,

HIGH CHIEF OF MACLEAN.

From the Gaelic.

[1815.]

This song appears to be imperfect, or, at least, like many of the early Gaelic poems, makes a rapid transition from one subject to another; from the situation, namely, of one of the daughters of the clan, who opens the song by lamenting the absence of her lover, to an eulogium over the military glories of the Chieftain. The translator has endeavoured to imitate the abrupt style of the original.

A WEARY month has wander'd o'er
Since last we parted on the shore;
Heaven! that I saw thee, Love, once more,
Safe on that shore again!—
'Twas valiant Lachlan gave the word:
Lachlan, of many a galley lord:
He call'd his kindred bands on board,
And launch'd them on the main.

Clan-Gillian is to ocean gone,
Clan-Gillian, fierce in foray known;
Rejoicing in the glory won
In many a bloody broil:
For wide is heard the thundering fray,
The rout, the ruin, the dismay,
When from the twilight glens away
Clan-Gillian drives the spoil.

† Bonail, or Bonallez, the old Scottish phrase for a feast at parting with a friend.

Woe to the hills that shall rebound
Our banner'd bag-pipes' maddening sound;
Clan-Gillian's onset echoing round,
Shall shake their inmost cell.
Woe to the bark whose crew shall gaze,
Where Lachlan's silken streamer plays!
The fools might face the lightning's blaze
As wisely and as well!

SAINT CLOUD.

[*Paris, 5th September*, 1815.]

SOFT spread the southern summer night
Her veil of darksome blue;
Then thousand stars combined to light
The terrace of Saint Cloud.

The evening breezes gently sigh'd,
Like breath of lover true,
Bewailing the deserted pride
And wreck of sweet Saint Cloud.

The drum's deep roll was heard afar,
The bugle wildly blew
Good-night to Hulan and Hussar,
That garrison Saint Cloud.

The startled Naiads from the shade
With broken urns withdrew,
And silenced was that proud cascade,
The glory of Saint Cloud.

We sate upon its steps of stone,
Nor could its silence rue,
When waked, to music of our own,
The echoes of Saint Cloud.

Slow Seine might hear each lovely note
Fall light as summer dew,
While through the moonless air they float,
Prolong'd from fair Saint Cloud.

And sure a melody more sweet
His waters never knew,
Though music's self was wont to meet
With Princes at Saint Cloud.

Nor then, with more delighted ear,
The circle round her drew,
Than ours, when gather'd round to hear
Our songstress at Saint Cloud.

Few happy hours poor mortals pass,—
Then give those hours their due,
And rank among the foremost class
Our evenings at Saint Cloud.

THE DANCE OF DEATH.

[1815.]

I.

NIGHT and morning were at meeting
Over Waterloo;
Cocks had sung their earliest greeting;
Faint and low they crew,

For no paly beam yet shone
On the heights of Mount Saint John;
Tempest-clouds prolong'd the sway
Of timeless darkness over day;
Whirlwind, thunder-clap, and shower,
Mark'd it a predestined hour.
Broad and frequent through the night
Flash'd the sheets of levin-light;
Muskets, glancing lightnings back,
Show'd the dreary bivouac
Where the soldier lay,
Chill and stiff, and drench'd with rain,
Wishing dawn of morn again,
Though death should come with day.

II.

'Tis at such a tide and hour,
Wizard, witch, and fiend have power,
And ghastly forms through mist and shower
Gleam on the gifted ken;
And then the affrighted prophet's ear
Drinks whispers strange of fate and fear
Presaging death and ruin near
Among the sons of men;—
Apart from Albyn's war-array,
'Twas then grey Allan sleepless lay;
Grey Allen, who, for many a day,
Had follow'd stout and stern,
Where, through battle's rout and reel,
Storm of shot and hedge of steel,
Led the grandson of Lochiel,
Valiant Fassiefern.
Through steel and shot he leads no more,
Low laid 'mid friends' and foemen's gore—
But long his native lake's wild shore,
And Sunart rough, and high Ardgower,
And Morven long shall tell,
And proud Bennevis hear with awe,
How, upon bloody Quatre-Bras,
Brave Cameron heard the wild hurra
Of conquest as he fell.

III.

'Lone on the outskirts of the host
The weary sentinel held post,
And heard, through darkness far aloof,
Where held the cloak'd patrol their course,
And spurr'd 'gainst storm the swerving horse;
But there are sounds in Allan's ear,
Patrol nor sentinel may hear,
And sights before his eye aghast
Invisible to them have pass'd,
When down the destined plain,
'Twixt Britain and the bands of France,
Wild as marsh-born meteor's glance,
Strange phantoms wheel'd a revel dance,
And doom'd the future slain.—
Such forms were seen, such sounds were heard,
When Scotland's James his march prepared
For Flodden's fatal plain;
Such, when he drew his ruthless sword,
As Chroosers of the Slain, adored
The yet unchristen'd Dane.
An indistinct and phantom band,
They wheel'd their ring-dance hand-in-hand,
With gestures wild and dread;
The Seer, who watch'd them ride the storm,
Saw through their faint and shadowy form
The lightning's flash more red;
And still their ghastly roundelay
Was of the coming battle-fray,
And of the destined dead.

IV.

SONG.

Wheel the wild dance
While lightnings glance,
And thunders rattle loud,
And call the brave
To bloody grave,
To sleep without a shroud.

Our airy feet,
So light and fleet,
They do not bend the rye
That sinks its head when whirlwinds rave,
And swells again in eddying wave,
As each wild gust blows by;
But still the corn,
At dawn of morn,
Our fatal steps that bore,
At eve lies waste,
A trampled paste
Of blackening mud and gore.

V.

Wheel the wild dance
While lightnings glance,
And thunders rattle loud,
And call the brave
To bloody grave,
To sleep without a shroud.

Wheel the wild dance!
Brave sons of France,
For you our ring makes room;
Make space full wide
For martial pride,
For banner, spear, and plume.
Approach, draw near,
Proud cuirassier!
Room for the men of steel!
Through crest and plate
The broadsword's weight
Both head and heart shall feel.

VI.

Wheel the wild dance!
While lightnings glance,
And thunders rattle loud,
And call the brave
To bloody grave,
To sleep without a shroud.

Sons of the spear!
You feel us near
In many a ghastly dream;
With fancy's eye
Our forms you spy,
And hear our fatal scream.
With clearer sight,
Ere falls the night,
Just when to weal or woe
Your disembodied souls take flight
On trembling wing—each startled sprite
Our choir of death shall know.

VII.

Wheel the wild dance
While lightnings glance,
And thunders rattle loud,
And call the brave
To bloody grave,
To sleep without a shroud.

Burst, ye clouds, in tempest showers,
Redder rain shall soon be ours—
See the east grows wan—
Yield we place to sterner game,
Ere deadlier bolts and direr flame
Shall the welkin's thunders shame;
Elemental rage is tame
To the wrath of man.

VIII.

At morn, grey Allan's mates with awe
Heard of the vision'd sights he saw,
The legend heard him say;
But the Seer's gifted eye was dim,
Deafen'd his ear, and stark his limb,
Ere closed that bloody day—
He sleeps far from his Highland heath,—
But often of the Dance of Death
His comrades tell the tale,
On picquet-post, when ebbs the night,
And waning watch-fires glow less bright,
And dawn is glimmering pale.

ROMANCE OF DUNOIS.†

FROM THE FRENCH.

[1815.]

The original of this little Romance makes part of a manuscript collection of French Songs (probably compiled by some young officer), which was found on the field of Waterloo, so much stained with clay and with blood as sufficiently to indicate the fate of its late owner. The song is popular in France, and is rather a good specimen of the style of composition to which it belongs. The translation is strictly literal.

† "Partant pour la Syrie" (words and music) was written by Hortense, ex-Queen of Holland, and mother of Napoleon III. It became the National air of France.

It was Dunois, the young and brave, was bound for Palestine, [Mary's shrine:
But first he made his orisons before Saint
"And grant, immortal Queen of Heaven," was still the Soldier's prayer,
"That I may prove the bravest knight, and love the fairest fair."

His oath of honour on the shrine he graved it with his sword, [of his Lord;
And follow'd to the Holy Land the banner
Where, faithful to his noble vow, his war-cry fill'd the air,
"Be honour'd aye the bravest knight, beloved the fairest fair."

They owed the conquest to his arm, and then his Liege-Lord said,
"The heart that has for honour beat by bliss must be repaid.—
My daughter Isabel and thou shall be a wedded pair, [fairest of the fair."
For thou art bravest of the brave, she

And then they bound the holy knot before Saint Mary's shrine,
That makes a paradise on earth, if hearts and hands combine;
And every lord and lady bright, that were in chapel there,
Cried, "Honour'd be the bravest knight, beloved the fairest fair!"

THE TROUBADOUR.

FROM THE SAME COLLECTION.

[1815.]

Glowing with love, on fire for fame,
A Troubadour that hated sorrow,
Beneath his lady's window came,
And thus he sung his last good-morrow:
"My arm it is my country's right,
My heart is in my true-love's bower;
Gaily for love and fame to fight
Befits the gallant Troubadour."

And while he march'd with helm on head
And harp in hand, the descant rung,
As, faithful to his favourite maid,
The minstrel-burden still he sung:
"My arm it is my country's right,
My heart is in my lady's bower;
Resolved for love and fame to fight,
I come, a gallant Troubadour."

Even when the battle-roar was deep,
With dauntless heart he hew'd his way,
'Mid splintering lance and falchion-sweep,
And still was heard his warrior-lay:
"My life it is my country's right,
My heart is in my lady's bower;
For love to die, for fame to fight,
Becomes the valiant Troubadour."

Alas! upon the bloody field
He fell beneath the foeman's glaive,
But still reclining on his shield,
Expiring sung the exulting stave:
"My life it is my country's right,
My heart is in my lady's bower;
For love and fame to fall in fight
Becomes the valiant Troubadour."

FROM THE FRENCH.

[1815.]

IT chanced that Cupid on a season,
By Fancy urged, resolved to wed,
But could not settle whether Reason
Or Folly should partake his bed.
What does he then?—Upon my life,
'Twas bad example for a deity—
He takes me Reason for a wife,
And Folly for his hours of gaiety.

Though thus he dealt in petty treason,
He loved them both in equal measure;
Fidelity was born of Reason,
And Folly brought to bed of Pleasure.

SONG.

On the lifting of the banner of the House of Buccleuch, at a great foot-ball match on Carterhaugh.

[1815.]

FROM the brown crest of Newark its summons extending,
Our signal is waving in smoke and in flame;
And each forester blithe, from his mountain descending,
Bounds light o'er the heather to join in the game.

CHORUS.

Then up with the Banner, let forest winds fan her,
She has blazed over Ettrick eight ages and more;
In sport we'll attend her, in battle defend her,
With heart and with hand, like our fathers before.

When the Southern invader spread waste and disorder,
At the glance of her crescents he paused and withdrew,
For around them were marshall'd the pride of the Border,
The Flowers of the Forest, the bands of BUCCLEUCH.
Then up with the Banner, &c.

A Stripling's weak hand to our revel has borne her,
No mail-glove has grasp'd her, no spear-men surround;
But ere a bold foeman should scathe or should scorn her,
A thousand true hearts would be cold on the ground.
Then up with the Banner, &c.

We forget each contention of civil dissension,
And hail, like our brethren, DOUGLAS, and CAR: [HOME,
And ELLIOT and PRINGLE in pastime shall mingle,
As welcome in peace as their fathers in war.
Then up with the Banner, &c.

Then strip, lads, and to it, though sharp be the weather,
And if, by mischance, you should happen to fall,
There are worse things in life than a tumble on heather,
And life is itself but a game at foot-ball.
Then up with the Banner, &c.

And when it is over, we'll drink a blithe measure
To each Laird and each Lady that witness'd our fun,
And to every blithe heart that took part in our pleasure,
To the lads that have lost and the lads that have won.
Then up with the Banner, &c.

May the forest still flourish, both Borough and Landward,
From the hall of the Peer to the Herd's ingle nook;
And huzza! my brave hearts, for BUCCLEUCH and his standard,
For the King and the Country, the Clan and the Duke!

Then up with the Banner, let forest winds fan her,
She has blazed over Ettrick eight ages and more;
In sport we'll attend her, in battle defend her,
With heart and with hand, like our fathers before.

LULLABY OF AN INFANT CHIEF.

AIR—*Cadul gu lo.*

[1815.]

I.

O, HUSH thee, my babie, thy sire was a knight,
Thy mother a lady both lovely and bright;
The woods and the glens, from the towers which we see,
They all are belonging, dear babie, to thee,
O ho ro, i ri ri, cadul gu lo,
O ho ro, i ri ri, &c.

II.

O, fear not the bugle, though loudly it blows,
It calls but the warders that guard thy repose;
Their bows would be bended, their blades would be red,
Ere the step of a foeman draws near to thy bed.
O ho ro, i ri ri, &c.

III.

O, hush thee, my babie, the time soon will come, [pet and drum;
When thy sleep shall be broken by trum-
Then hush thee, my darling, take rest while you may, [ing with day.
For strife comes with manhood, and wak-
O ho ro, i ri ri, &c.

THE RETURN TO ULSTER.

[1816.]

ONCE again,—but how changed since my wanderings began— [and Bann,
I have heard the deep voice of the Lagan
And the pines of Clanbrassil resound to the roar
That wearies the echoes of fair Tullamore.
Alas! my poor bosom, and why shouldst thou burn? [tures return?
With the scenes of my youth can its rap-
Can I live the dear life of delusion again,
That flow'd when these echoes first mix'd with my strain?

It was then that around me, though poor and unknown, [were thrown;
High spells of mysterious enchantment
The streams were of silver, of diamond the dew,
The land was an Eden, for fancy was new.
I had heard of our bards, and my soul was on fire [of their lyre:
At the rush of their verse, and the sweep
To me 'twas not legend, nor tale to the ear,
But a vision of noontide, distinguish'd and clear.

Ultonia's old heroes awoke at the call,
And renew'd the wild pomp of the chase and the hall; [from on high,
And the standard of Fion flash'd fierce
Like a burst of the sun when the tempest is nigh. [once more
It seem'd that the harp of green Erin
Could renew all the glories she boasted of yore.— [should'st thou burn?
Yet why at remembrance, fond heart,
They were days of delusion, and cannot return.

But was she, too, a phanton, the Maid who stood by, mine eye?
And listed my lay, while she turn'd from
Was she, too, a vision, just glancing to view,
Then dispersed in the sunbeam, or melted to dew? [that her eye
Oh! would it had been so,—Oh! would
Had been but a star-glance that shot through the sky,
And her voice that was moulded to melody's thrill,
Had been but a zephyr, that sigh'd and was still!

Oh! would it had been so,—not then this poor heart [part;
Had learn'd the sad lesson, to love and to
To bear, unassisted, its burthen of care,
While I toil'd for the wealth I had no one to share. [was done,
Not then had I said, when life's summer
And the hours of her autumn were fast speeding on, [in your train,
"Take the fame and the riches ye brought
And restore me the dream of my spring-tide again."

JOCK OF HAZELDEAN.

AIR—*A Border Melody.*

[1816.]

The first stanza of this ballad is ancient. The others were writtten for Mr. Cempbell's Albyn's Anthology.

I.

"Why weep ye by the tide, ladie?
Why weep ye by the tide?
I'll wed ye to my youngest son,
And ye sall be his bride:
And ye sall be his bride, ladie,
Sae comely to be seen"—
But aye she loot the tears down fa'
For Jock of Hazeldean.

II.

"Now let this wilfu' grief be done,
And dry that cheek so pale;
Young Frank is chief of Errington,
And lord of Langley-dale;
His step is first in peaceful ha',
His sword in battle keen"—
But aye she loot the tears down fa'
For Jock of Hazeldean.

III.

"A chain of gold ye sall not lack,
Nor braid to bind your hair;
Nor mettled hound, nor managed hawk,
Nor palfrey fresh and fair;
And you, the foremost o' them a',
Shall ride our forest queen"—
But aye she loot the tears down fa'
For Jock of Hazeldean.

IV.

The kirk was deck'd at morning-tide,
The tapers glimmer'd fair;
The priest and bridegroom wait the bride,
And dame and knight are there.
They sought her baith by bower and ha';
The ladie was not seen!
She's o'er the Border, and awa'
Wi' Jock of Hazeldean.

PIBROCH OF DONALD DHU.

AIR—"*Piobair of Donuil Dhuidh.*"

[1816.]

This is a very ancient pibroch belonging to Clan MacDonald, and supposed to refer to the expedition of Donald Balloch, who, in 1431, launched from the Isles with a considerable force, invaded Lochaber, and at Inverlochy defeated and put to flight the Earls of Mar and Caithness, though at the head of an army superior to his own. The words of the set, theme, or melody, to which the pipe variations are applied, run thus in Gaelic:—

Piobaireachd Dhonuil Dhuidh, piobaireachd Dhonuil;
Piobaireachd Dhonuil Dhuidh, piobaireachd Dhonuil;
Piobaireachd Dhonuil Dhuidh, piobaireachd Dhonuil;
Piob agus bratach air faiche Inverlochi.
The pipe-summons of Donald the Black,
The pipe-summons of Donald the Black,
The war-pipe and the pennon are on the gathering-place at Inverlochy.

PIBROCH of Donuil Dhu,
Pibroch of Donuil,
Wake thy wild voice anew,
Summon Clan Conuil.
Come away, come away,
Hark to the summons!
Come in your war array,
Gentles and commons.

Come from deep glen, and
From mountain so rocky,
The war-pipe and pennon
Are at Inverlochy.
Come every hill-plaid, and
True heart that wears one,
Come every steel blade, and
Strong hand that bears one.

Leave untended the herd,
The flock without shelter;
Leave the corpse uninterr'd,
The bride at the altar;
Leave the deer, leave the steer,
Leave nets and barges:
Come with your fighting gear,
Broadswords and targes.

Come as the winds come, when
Forests are rended;
Come as the waves come, when
Navies are stranded:
Faster come, faster come,
Faster and faster,
Chief, vassal, page and groom,
Tenant and master.

Fast they come, fast they come;
See how they gather!
Wild waves the eagle plume,
Blended with heather.

Cast your plaids, draw your blades,
Forward each man set!
Pibroch of Donuil Dhu,
Knell for the onset!

NORA'S VOW.

AIR—*Cha teid mis a chaoidh.*†

WRITTEN FOR ALBYN'S ANTHOLOGY.

[1816.]

In the original Gaelic, the lady makes protestations that she will not go with the Red Earl's son, until the swan should build in the cliff, and the eagle in the lake—until one mountain should change places with another, and so forth. It is but fair to add, that there is no authority for supposing that she altered her mind—except the vehemence of her protestation.

I.

HEAR what Highland Nora said—
"The Earlie's son I will not wed,
Should all the race of nature die,
And none be left but he and I.
For all the gold, for all the gear,
And all the lands both far and near,
That ever valour lost or won,
I would not wed the Earlie's son."—

II.

"A maiden's vows," old Callum spoke,
"Are lightly made and lightly broke;
The heather on the mountain's height
Begins to bloom in purple light;
The frost-wind soon shall sweep away
That lustre deep from glen and brae;
Yet Nora, ere its bloom be gone,
May blithely wed the Earlie's son."—

III.

"The swan," she said, "the lake's clear breast
May barter for the eagle's nest;
The Awe's fierce stream may backward turn,
Ben-Cruaichan fall, and crush Kilchurn;
Our kilted clans, when blood is high,
Before their foes may turn and fly;
But I, were all these marvels done,
Would never wed the Earlie's son."

IV.

Still in the water-lily's shade
Her wonted nest the wild-swan made;
Ben-Cruaichan stands as fast as ever,
Still downward foams the Awe's fierce river,
To shun the clash of foeman's steel,
No Highland brogue has turn'd the heel:
But Nora's heart is lost and won,
—She's wedded to the Earlie's son!

† "I will never go with him."

MACGREGOR'S GATHERING.

WRITTEN FOR ALBYN'S ANTHOLOGY.

AIR—*Thain' a Grigalach.*†

[1816.]

THE moon's on the lake, and the mist's on the brae,
And the clan has a name that is nameless by day;
Then gather, gather, gather, Grigalach!
Gather, gather, gather, &c.

Our signal for fight, that from monarchs we drew,
Must be heard but by night in our vengeful haloo!
Then haloo, Grigalach! haloo, Grigalach!
Haloo, haloo, haloo, Grigalach, &c.

Glen Orchy's proud mountains, Coalchuirn and her towers,
Glenstrae and Glenlyon no longer are ours;
We're landless, landless, landless, Grigalach!
Landless, landless, landless, &c.

But doom'd and devoted by vassal and lord,
MacGregor has still both his heart and his sword!
Then courage, courage, courage, Grigalach!
Courage, courage, courage, &c.

If they rob us of name, and pursue us with beagles,
Give their roofs to the flame, and their flesh to the eagles!
Then vengeance, vengeance, vengeance, Grigalach!
Vengeance, vengeance, vengeance, &c.

While there's leaves in the forest, and foam on the river,
MacGregor, despite them, shall flourish for ever!
Come then, Grigalach, come then, Grigalach!
Come then, come then, come then, &c.

Through the depths of Loch Katrine the steed shall career,
O'er the peak of Ben-Lomond the galley shall steer,
And the rocks of Craig-Royston like icicles melt,
Ere our wrongs be forgot, or our vengeance unfelt!
Then gather, gather, gather, Grigalach!
Gather, gather, gather, &c.

† "The MacGregor is come."

VERSES.

COMPOSED FOR THE OCCASION, ADAPTED TO HAYDN'S AIR,

"God save the Emperor Francis,"

AND SUNG BY A SELECT BAND AFTER THE DINNER GIVEN BY THE LORD PROVOST OF EDINBURGH TO THE GRAND-DUKE NICHOLAS OF RUSSIA, AND HIS SUITE.

[19TH DECEMBER, 1816.]

GOD protect brave ALEXANDER,
Heaven defend the noble Czar,
Mighty Russia's high Commander,
First in Europe's banded war!
For the realms he did deliver
From the tyrant overthrown,
Thou, of every good the Giver,
Grant him long to bless his own!
Bless him, 'mid his land's disaster,
For her rights who battled brave,
Of the land of foemen master,
Bless him who their wrongs forgave!

O'er his just resentment victor,
Victor over Europe's foes,
Late and long supreme director,
Grant in peace his reign may close!
Hail! then, hail! illustrious stranger!
Welcome to our mountain strand!
Mutual interests, hopes, and danger,
Link us with thy native land.
Freemen's force, or false beguiling,
Shall that union ne'er divide,
Hand in hand while peace is smiling,
And in battle side by side.

THE SEARCH AFTER HAPPINESS;

OR, THE QUEST OF SULTAUN SOLIMAUN.

[1817.]

I.

OH for a glance of that gay Muse's eye,
That lighten'd on Bandello's laughing tale, [sly,
And twinkled with a lustre shrewd and
When Giam Battista bade her vision hail!—
Yet fear not, ladies, the *naïve* detail
Given by the natives of that land canorous;
Italian license loves to leap the pale,
We Britons have the fear of shame before us, [decorous.
And, if not wise in mirth, at least must be

II.

In the far eastern clime, no great while since,
Lived Sultaun Solimaun, a mighty prince,

Whose eyes, as oft as they perform'd their round,
Beheld all others fix'd upon the ground;
Whose ears received the same unvaried phrase,
"Sultaun! thy vassal hears, and he obeys!"
All have their tastes—this may the fancy strike [like;
Of such grave folks as pomp and grandeur
For me, I love the honest heart and warm
Of Monarch who can amble round his farm,
Or, when the toil of state no more annoys,
In chimney-corner seek domestic joys—
I love a prince will bid the bottle pass,
Exchanging with his subjects glance and glass;
In fitting time, can, gayest of the gay,
Keep up the jest, and mingle in the lay—
Such Monarchs best our free-born humours suit, [mute.
But Despots must be stately, stern, and

III.

This Solimaun, Serendib had in sway—
And where's Serendib? may some critic say,— [chart,
Good lack, mine honest friend, consult the
Scare not my Pegasus before I start!
If Rennell has it not, you'll find, mayhap,
The isle laid down in Captain Sinbad's map,— [tions
Famed mariner! whose merciless narra-
Drove every friend and kinsman out of patience, [shorter,
Till, fain to find a guest who thought them
He deign'd to tell them over to a porter—
The last edition see, by Long. and Co.,
Rees, Hurst, and Orme, our fathers in the Row.

IV.

Serendib found, deem not my tale a fiction— [tion
This Sultaun, whether lacking contradic-
(A sort of stimulant which hath its uses,
To raise the spirits and reform the juices,
—Sovereign specific for all sorts of cures
In my wife's practice, and perhaps in yours)— [bitter,
The Sultaun lacking this same wholesome
Or cordial smooth for prince's palate fitter—
Or if some Mollah had hag-rid his dreams
With Degial, Ginnistan, and such wild themes
Belonging to the Mollah's subtle craft,
I wot not—but the Sultaun never laugh'd,
Scarce ate or drank, and took a melancholy,
That scorn'd all remedy—profane or holy;
In his long list of melancholies, mad,
Or mazed, or dumb, hath Burton none so bad.

V.

Physicians soon arrived, sage, ware, and tried, [room;
As e'er scrawl'd jargon in a darken'd
With heedful glance the Sultaun's tongue they eyed, [beside,
Peep'd in his bath, and God knows where
And then in solemn accent spoke their doom.

"His Majesty is very far from well."
Then each to work with his specific fell:
The Hakim Ibrahim *instanter* brought
His unguent Mahazzim al Zerdukkaut,
While Roompot, a practitioner more wily,
Relied on his Munaskif al fillfily.
More and yet more in deep array appear,
And some the front assail, and some the rear;
Their remedies to reinforce and vary,
Came surgeon eke, and eke apothecary;
Till the tired Monarch, though of words grown chary, [labour,
Yet dropt, to recompense their fruitless
Some hint about a bowstring or a sabre.
There lack'd, I promise you, no longer speeches
To rid the palace of those learned leeches.

VI.

Then was the council called—by their advice [nice,
(They deem'd the matter ticklish all, and
And sought to shift it off from their own shoulders),
Tartars and couriers in all speed were sent
To call a sort of Eastern Parliament
Of feudatory chieftains and freeholders—
Such have the Persians at this very day,
My gallant Malcolm calls them *couroultai*;—
I'm not prepared to show in this slight song
That to Serendib the same forms belong,—
E'en let the learn'd go search, and tell me if I'm wrong.

VII.

The Omrahs, each with hand on scymitar,
Gave, like Sempronius, still their voice for war—
"The sabre of the Sultaun in its sheath
Too long has slept, nor own'd the work of death;
Let the Tambourgi bid his signal rattle,
Bang the loud gong, and raise the shout of battle! [reign's day,
This dreary cloud that dims our sove-
Shall from his kindled bosom flit away,
When the bold Lootie wheels his courser round,
And the arm'd elephant shall shake the ground.

Each noble pants to own the glorious summons— [Commons!"
And for the charges—Lo! your faithful
The Riots who attended in their places
(Serendib language calls a farmer Riot)
Look'd ruefully in one another's faces,
From this oration auguring much disquiet, [ters;
Double assessment, forage, and free quar-
And fearing these as China-men the Tartars, [mousers,
Or as the whisker'd vermin fear the
Each fumbled in the pocket of his trowsers.

VIII.

And next came forth the reverend Convocation, [turban green,
Bald heads, white beards, and many a
Imaum and Mollah there of every station,
Santon, Fakir, and Calendar were seen.
Their votes were various—some advised a Mosque
With fitting revenues should be erected,
With seemly gardens and with gay Kiosque,
To recreate a band of priests selected;
Others opined that through the realms a dole [might profit
Be made to holy men, whose prayers
The Sultaun's weal in body and in soul.
But their long-headed chief, the Sheik Ul-Sofit,
More closely touch'd the point:—"Thy studious mood,"
Quoth he, "O Prince! hath thicken'd all thy blood, [measure;
And dull'd thy brain with labour beyond
Wherefore relax a space and take thy pleasure, [treasure;
And toy with beauty, or tell o'er thy
From all the cares of state, my Liege, enlarge thee,
And leave the burden to thy faithful clergy."

IX.

These counsels sage availèd not a whit,
And so the patient (as is not uncommon [and wit)
Where grave physicians lose their time
Resolved to take advice of an old woman;
His mother she, a dame who once was beauteous, [duteous.
And still was call'd so by each subject
Now, whether Fatima was witch in earnest,
Or only made believe, I cannot say—
But she profess'd to cure disease the sternest,
By dint of magic amulet or lay;
And, when all other skill in vain was shown,
She deem'd it fitting time to use her own.

X.

"*Sympathiamagica* hath wonders done"
(Thus did old Fatima bespeak her son),
"It works upon the fibres and the pores,
And thus, insensibly, our health restores,
And it must help us here.—Thou must endure
The ill, my son, or travel for the cure.
Search land and sea, and get, where'er you can,
The inmost vesture of a happy man,
I mean his SHIRT, my son; which, taken warm [your harm,
And fresh from off his back, shall chase
Bid every current of your veins rejoice,
And your dull heart leap light as shepherd-boy's." [came;—
Such was the counsel from his mother
I know not if she had some under-game,
As Doctors have, who bid their patients roam [home;
And live abroad, when sure to die at
Or if she thought, that, somehow or another, [Mother;
Queen-Regent sounded better than Queen-
But, says the Chronicle (who will go look it), [took it.
That such was her advice—the Sultaun

XI.

All are on board—the Sultaun and his train, [main.
In gilded galley prompt to plough the
The old Rais was the first who question'd, "Whither?"
They paused—"Arabia," thought the pensive Prince, [since—
"Was call'd The Happy many ages
For Mokha, Rais."—And they came safely thither.
But not in Araby, with all her balm,
Not where Judea weeps beneath her palm,
Not in rich Egypt, not in Nubian waste,
Could there the step of happiness be traced. [smile,
One Copt alone profess'd to have seen her
When Bruce his goblet fill'd at infant Nile;
She bless'd the dauntless traveller as he quaff'd,
But vanish'd from him with the ended draught.

XII.

"Enough of turbans," said the weary King, [thing;
"These dolimans of ours are not the
Try we the Giaours, these men of coat and cap, I [happy;
Incline to think some of them must be
At least, they have as fair a cause as any can, [Ramazan.
They drink good wine and keep no

Then northward, ho!"—The vessel cuts the sea,
And fair Italia lies upon her lee.—
But fair Italia, she who once unfurl'd
Her eagle banners o'er a conquer'd world,
Long from her throne of domination tumbled, [humbled;
Lay, by her quondam vassals, sorely
The Pope himself look'd pensive, pale, and lean,
And was not half the man he once had been.
"While these the priest and those the noble fleeces, [to pieces.
Our poor old boot," they said, "is torn
Its tops the vengeful claws of Austria feel,
And the Great Devil is rending toe and heel;
If happiness you seek, to tell you truly,
We think she dwells with one Giovanni Bulli;
A tramontane, a heretic,—the buck,
Poffaredio! still has all the luck;
By land or ocean never strikes his flag—
And then—a perfect walking money-bag."
Off set our Prince to seek John Bull's abode, [road.
But first took France—it lay upon the

XIII.

Monsieur Baboon, after much late commotion,
Was agitated like a settling ocean,
Quite out of sorts, and could not tell what ail'd him, [him;
Only the glory of his house had fail'd
Besides, some tumours on his noddle biding,
Gave indication of a recent hiding.
Our Prince, though Sultauns of such things are heedless,
Thought it a thing indelicate and needless
To ask, if at that moment he was happy.
And Monsieur, seeing that he was *comme il faut*, a [*Roi!*"
Loud voice muster'd up, for "*Vive le*
Then whisper'd, "Ave you any news of Nappy?" [question,—
The Sultaun answer'd him with a cross
"Pray, can you tell me aught of one John Bull, [herring-pool?"
That dwells somewhere beyond your
The query seem'd of difficult digestion,
The party shrugg'd, and grinn'd, and took his snuff, [enough.
And found his whole good-breeding scarce

XIV.

Twitching his visage into as many puckers
As damsels wont to put into their tuckers
(Ere liberal Fashion damn'd both lace and lawn,
And bade the veil of modesty be drawn),
Replied the Frenchman, after a brief pause, [I vas—
"Jean Bool!—I vas not know him—yes,
I vas remember dat, von year or two,
I saw him at von place call'd Vaterloo—
Ma foi! il s'est tres joliment battu,
Dat is for Englishman,—m'entendezvous?
But den he had wit him one damn son-gun,
Rogue I no like—dey call him Vellington."
Monsieur's politeness could not hide his fret, [strait.
So Solimaun took leave, and cross'd the

XV.

John Bull was in his very worst of moods,
Raving of sterile farms and unsold goods;
His sugar-loaves and bales about he threw,
And on his counter beat the devil's tattoo.
His wars were ended, and the victory won,
But then, 'twas reckoning-day with honest John; [thy's way,
And authors vouch, 'twas still this Wor-
"Never to grumble till he came to pay;
And then he always thinks, his temper's such,
The work too little, and the pay too much."
Yet, grumbler as he is, so kind and hearty,
That when his mortal foe was on the floor,
And past the power to harm his quiet more,
Poor John had well-nigh wept for Bonaparte! [salam'd,—
Such was the wight whom Solimaun
"And who are you," John answer'd, "and be d—d!"

XVI.

"A stranger, come to see the happiest man,—
So, signior, all avouch,—in Frangistan."—
"Happy? my tenants breaking on my hand; [land;
Unstock'd my pastures, and untill'd my
Sugar and rum a drug, and mice and moths [cloths—
The sole consumers of my good broad-
Happy?—Why, cursed war and racking tax [backs."—
Have left us scarcely raiment to our
"In that case, signior, I may take my leave;
I came to ask a favour—but I grieve"——
"Favour?" said John, and eyed the Sultaun hard, [yard!—
"It's my belief you come to break the
But, stay, you look like some poor foreign sinner,— [dinner."—
Take that to buy yourself a shirt and
With that he chuck'd a guinea at his head;
But, with due dignity, the Sultaun said,
"Permit me, sir, your bounty to decline;
A *shirt* indeed I seek, but none of thine.

Signior, I kiss your hands, so fare you well."—
"Kiss and be d—d," quoth John, "and [go to hell!"

XVII.

Next door to John there dwelt his sister Peg,
Once a wild lass as ever shook a leg
When the blithe bagpipe blew—but, soberer now,
She *doucely* span her flax and milk'd her cow.
And whereas erst she was a needy slattern,
Nor now of wealth or cleanliness a pattern,
Yet once a-month her house was partly swept,
And once a-week a plenteous board she kept.
And whereas, eke, the vixen used her claws
And teeth, of yore, on slender provocation,
She now was grown amenable to laws,
A quiet soul as any in the nation;
The sole remembrance of her warlike joys
Was in old songs she sang to please her boys.
John Bull, whom, in their years of early strife,
She wont to lead a cat-and-doggish life,
Now found the woman, as he said, a neighbour,
Who look'd to the main chance, declined labour,
Loved a long grace, and spoke a northern jargon,
And was d—d close in making of a bargain.

XVIII.

The Sultaun enter'd, and he made his leg,
And with decorum curtsey'd sister Peg.
(She loved a book, and knew a thing or two,
And guess'd at once with whom she had to do.)
She bade him "Sit into the fire," and took
Her dram, her cake, her kebbuck from the nook;
Ask'd him "about the news from eastern parts;
And of her absent bairns, puir Highland hearts!
If peace brought down the price of tea and pepper,
And if the *nitmugs* were grown *ony* cheaper;
Were there nae *speerings* of our Mungo Park—
Ye'll be the gentleman that wants the sark!
If ye wad buy a web o' auld wife's spinnin',
I'll warrant ye it 's a weel-wearing linen."

XIX.

Then up got Peg, and round the house 'gan scuttle
In search of goods her customer to nail,
Until the Sultaun strain'd his princely throttle,
And hollo'd—"Ma'am, that is not what I ail.
Pray, are you happy, ma'am, in this snug glen?"
"Happy?" said Peg; "what for d'ye want to ken?
Besides, just think upon this by-gane year,
Grain wadna pay the yoking of the pleugh."—
"What say you to the present?"—["Meal's sae dear,
To mak' their *brose* my bairns have scarce aneugh."—
"The devil take the shirt," said Solimaun,
"I think my quest will end as it began.—
Farewell, ma'am; nay, no ceremony, I beg"—— [Peg.
"Ye'll no be for the linen, then?" said

XX.

Now, for the land of verdant Erin,
The Sultaun's royal bark is steering,
The Emerald Isle, where honest Paddy dwells,
The cousin of John Bull, as story tells.
For a long space had John, with words of thunder,
Hard looks, and harder knocks, kept Paddy under,
Till the poor lad, like boy that 's flogg'd unduly,
Had gotten somewhat restive and unruly.
Hard was his lot and lodging, you'll allow,
A wigwam that would hardly serve a sow;
His landlord, and of middle-men two brace,
Had screw'd his rent up to the starving-place;
His garment was a top-coat, and an old one,
His meal was a potato, and a cold one;
But still for fun or frolic, and all that,
In the round world was not the match of Pat.

XXI.

The Sultaun saw him on a holiday,
Which is with Paddy still a jolly day:
When mass is ended, and his load of sins
Confess'd, and Mother Church hath from her binns
Dealt forth a bonus of imputed merit,
Then is Pat's time for fancy, whim, and spirit!
To jest, to sing, to caper fair and free,
And dance as light as leaf upon the tree.
"By Mahomet," said Sultaun Solimaun,
"That ragged fellow is our very man!
Rush in and seize him—do not do him hurt,
But, will he nill he, let me have his shirt."—

XXII.

Shilela their plan was well-nigh after baulking
(Much less provocation will set it a-walking),
But the odds that foil'd Hercules foil'd Paddy Whack;
They seized, and they floor'd, and they stripp'd him—Alack!

Up-bubboo! Paddy had not——a shirt to his back!!! [and shame,
And the King, disappointed, with sorrow
Went back to Serendib as sad as he came.

THE SUN UPON THE WEIRDLAW HILL.

[1817.]

The sun upon the Weirdlaw Hill,
In Ettrick's vale, is sinking sweet;
The westland wind is hush and still,
The lake lies sleeping at my feet.
Yet not the landscape to mine eye [bore;
Bears those bright hues that once it
Though evening, with her richest dye,
Flames o'er the hills of Ettrick's shore.

With listless look along the plain,
I see Tweed's silver current glide,
And coldly mark the holy fane
Of Melrose rise in ruin'd pride.
The quiet lake, the balmy air, [tree,—
The hill, the stream, the tower, the
Are they still such as once they were?
Or is the dreary change in me?

Alas, the warp'd and broken board,
How can it bear the painter's dye!
The harp of strain'd and tuneless chord,
How to the minstrel's skill reply!
To aching eyes each landscape lowers,
To feverish pulse each gale blows chill;
And Araby's or Eden's bowers
Were barren as this moorland hill.

THE MONKS OF BANGOR'S MARCH.

AIR—"*Ymdaith Mionge.*"

WRITTEN FOR MR. GEORGE THOMSON'S WELSH MELODIES.

[1817.]

ETHELFRID, or OLFRID, King of Northumberland, having besieged Chester in 613, and BROCKMAEL, a British Prince, advancing to relieve it, the religious of the neighbouring Monastery of Bangor marched in procession, to pray for the success of their countrymen. But, the British being totally defeated, the heathen victor put the monks to the sword, and destroyed their monastery. The tune to which these verses are adapted is called the Monks' March, and is supposed to have been played at their ill-omened procession.

WHEN the heathen trumpet's clang
Round beleaguer'd Chester rang,
Veilèd nun and friar grey
March'd from Bangor's fair Abbaye;
High their holy anthem sounds,
Cestria's vale the hymn rebounds,
Floating down the sylvan Dee,
O miserere, Domine!

On the long procession goes,
Glory round their crosses glows,
And the Virgin-mother mild
In their peaceful banner smiled:
Who could think such saintly band
Doom'd to feel unhallow'd hand?
Such was the Divine decree,
O miserere, Domine!

Bands that masses only sung,
Hands that censers only swung,
Met the northern bow and bill,
Heard the war-cry wild and shrill:
Woe to Brockmael's feeble hand,
Woe to Olfrid's bloody brand,
Woe to Saxon cruelty,
O miserere, Domine!

Weltering amid warriors slain,
Spurn'd by steeds with bloody mane,
Slaughter'd down by heathen blade,
Bangor's peaceful monks are laid;
Word of parting rest unspoke,
Mass unsung, and bread unbroke;
For their souls for charity,
Sing, O miserere, Domine!

Bangor! o'er the murder wail!
Long thy ruins told the tale;
Shatter'd towers and broken arch
Long recall'd the woeful march:†
On thy shrine no tapers burn,
Never shall thy priests return;
The pilgrim sighs, and sings for thee,
O miserere, Domine!

MR. KEMBLE'S FAREWELL ADDRESS,

ON TAKING LEAVE OF THE EDINBURGH STAGE.

[1817.]

As the worn war-horse, at the trumpet's sound, [the ground—
Erects his mane, and neighs, and paws
Disdains the ease his generous lord assigns,
And longs to rush on the embattled lines,
So I, your plaudits ringing on mine ear,
Can scarce sustain to think our parting near;
To think my scenic hour for ever past,
And that these valued plaudits are my last.
Why should we part, while still some powers remain, [vain?
That in your service strive not yet in
Cannot high zeal the strength of youth supply,
And sense of duty fire the fading eye;

† In William of Malmsbury's time the extent of the ruins bore ample witness to this desolation.

And all the wrongs of age remain subdued
Beneath the burning glow of gratitude?
Ah no!—the taper, wearing to its close,
Oft for a space in fitful lustre glows;
But all too soon the transient gleam is past—
It cannot be renew'd, and will not last;
Even duty, zeal, and gratitude can wage
But short-lived conflict with the frosts of age. [was,
Yes! it were poor, remembering what I
To live a pensioner on your applause,
To drain the dregs of your endurance dry,
And take, as alms, the praise I once could buy;
Till every sneering youth around inquires,
"Is this the man who once could please our sires?" [mien,
And scorn assumes compassion's doubtful
To warn me off from the encumber'd scene.
This must not be;—and higher duties crave [grave,
Some space between the theatre and the
That like the Roman in the Capitol,
I may adjust my mantle ere I fall:
My life's brief act in public service flown,
The last, the closing scene, must be my own.

Here, then, adieu! while yet some well-graced parts
May fix an ancient favourite in your hearts,
Not quite to be forgotten, even when
You look on better actors, younger men:
And if your bosoms own this kindly debt
Of old remembrance, how shall mine forget—
O, how forget!—how oft I hither came
In anxious hope, how oft return'd with fame!
How oft around your circle this weak hand
Has waved immortal Shakspere's magic wand,
Till the full burst of inspiration came,
And I have felt, and you have fann'd the flame! [dures,
By mem'ry treasured, while her reign en-
Those hours must live—and all their charms are yours.

O favour'd Land, renown'd for arts and arms,
For manly talent, and for female charms,
Could this full bosom prompt the sinking line,
What fervent benedictions now were thine!
But my last part is play'd, my knell is rung,
When e'en your praise falls faltering from my tongue;
And all that you can hear, or I can tell,
Is—Friends and Patrons, hail! and FARE YOU WELL!

LINES,

WRITTEN FOR MISS SMITH.

[1817.]

WHEN the lone pilgrim views afar
The shrine that is his guiding star,
With awe his footsteps print the road
Which the loved saint of yore has trod.
As near he draws, and yet more near,
His dim eye sparkles with a tear;
The Gothic fane's unwonted show,
The choral hymn, the tapers' glow,
Oppress his soul; while they delight
And chasten rapture with affright.
No longer dare he think his toil
Can merit aught his patron's smile;
Too light appears the distant way,
The chilly eve, the sultry day—
All these endured no favour claim,
But murmuring forth the sainted name,
He lays his little offering down,
And only deprecates a frown.

We, too, who ply the Thespian art,
Oft feel such bodings of the heart,
And, when our utmost powers are strain'd,
Dare hardly hope your favour gain'd.
She, who from sister climes has sought
The ancient land where Wallace fought—
Land long renown'd for arms and arts,
And conquering eyes and dauntless hearts—
She, as the flutterings *here* avow,
Feels all the pilgrim's terrors *now*;
Yet sure on Caledonian plain
The stranger never sued in vain.
'Tis yours the hospitable task
To give the applause she dare not ask;
And they who bid the pilgrim speed,
The pilgrim's blessing be their meed.

EPILOGUE TO THE APPEAL.

SPOKEN BY MRS. HENRY SIDDONS,

FEB. 16, 1818.

A CAT of yore (or else old Æsop lied)
Was changed into a fair and blooming bride,
But spied a mouse upon her marriage-day,
Forgot her spouse, and seized upon her prey; [saw,
Even thus my bridegroom lawyer, as you
Threw off poor me, and pounced upon papa. [loose,
His neck from Hymen's mystic knot made
He twisted round my sire's the literal noose.
Such are the fruits of our dramatic labour
Since the New Jail became our next-door neighbour.

Yes, times *are* changed; for, in your father's age,
The lawyers were the patrons of the stage;
However high advanced by future fate,
There stands the bench (*points to the Pit*) that first received their weight.
The future legal sage, 'twas ours to see,
Doom though unwigg'd, and plead without a fee.

But now, astounding each poor mimic elf,
Instead of lawyers comes the law herself;
Tremendous neighbour on our right she dwells, [cells;
Builds high her towers, and excavates her
While on the left she agitates the town,
With the tempestuous question, Up or down?
'Twixt Scylla and Charybdis thus stand we,
Law's final end, and law's uncertainty.
But soft! who lives at Rome the Pope must flatter, [ter.
And jails and lawsuits are no jesting mat-
Then—just farewell! We wait with serious awe
Till your applause or censure gives the law.
Trusting our humble efforts may assure ye,
We hold you Court and Counsel, Judge and Jury.

MACKRIMMON'S LAMENT.

[1818.]

AIR—"*Cha till mi tuille.*"

Mackrimmon, hereditary piper to the Laird of Macleod, is said to have composed this Lament when the Clan was about to depart upon a distant and dangerous expedition. The Minstrel was impressed with a belief, which the event verified, that he was to be slain in the approaching feud; and hence the Gaelic words, "*Cha till mi tuille; ged thillis Macleod, cha till Mackrimmon,*" "I shall never return; although Macleod returns, yet Mackrimmon shall never return!" The piece is but too well known, from its being the strain with which the emigrants from the West Highlands and Isles usually take leave of their native shore.

MACLEOD'S wizard flag from the grey castle sallies, [galleys;
The rowers are seated, unmoor'd are the
Gleam war-axe and broadsword, clang target and quiver,
As Mackrimmon sings, "Farewell to Dunvegan for ever!
Farewell to each cliff, on which breakers are foaming; [deer are roaming;
Farewell each dark glen, in which red-
Farewell, lonely Skye, to lake, mountain, and river; [shall never!
Macleod may return, but Mackrimmon

"Farewell the bright clouds that on Quillan are sleeping; [are weeping;
Farewell the bright eyes in the Dun that
To each minstrel delusion, farewell!—and for ever— [never!
Mackrimmon departs, to return to you
The *Banshee's* wild voice sings the death-dirge before me, [o'er me;
The pall of the dead for a mantle hangs
But my heart shall not flag, and my nerves shall not shiver, [never!
Though devoted I go—to return again

"Too oft shall the notes of Mackrimmon's bewailing [sailing;
Be heard when the Gael on their exile are
Dear land! to the shores, whence unwilling we sever,
Return—return—return shall we never!
Cha till, cha till, cha till sin tuille!
Cha till, cha till, cha till sin tuille,
Cha till, cha till, cha till sin tuille,
Gea thillis Macleod, cha till Mackrimmon!"

DONALD CAIRD'S COME AGAIN.

AIR—"*Malcolm Caird's come again.*"

[1818.]

CHORUS.

DONALD CAIRD'S *come again!*
Donald Caird's come again!
Tell the news in brugh and glen,
Donald Caird's come again!

Donald Caird can lilt and sing,
Blithely dance the Highland fling,
Drink till the gudeman be blind,
Fleech till the gudewife be kind;
Hoop a leglin, clout a pan,
Or crack a pow wi' ony man;
Tell the news in brugh and glen,
Donald Caird's come again.

Donald Caird's come again!
Donald Caird's come again!
Tell the news in brugh and glen,
Donald Caird's come again.

Donald Caird can wire a maukin,
Kens the wiles o' dun-deer staukin',
Leisters kipper, makes a shift
To shoot a muir-fowl in the drift;
Water-bailiffs, rangers, keepers,
He can wauk when they are sleepers;
Not for bountith or reward
Dare ye mell wi' Donald Caird.

Donald Caird's come again!
Donald Caird's come again!
Gar the bagpipes hum amain,
Donald Caird's come again.

Donald Caird can drink a gill
Fast as hostler-wife can fill;
Ilka ane that sells gude liquor
Kens how Donald bends a bicker;
When he's fou he's stout and saucy,
Keeps the cantle o' the cawsey;
Hieland chief and Lawland laird
Maun gie room to Donald Caird!

Donald Caird's come again!
Donald Caird's come again!
Tell the news in brugh and glen,
Donald Caird's come again.

Steek the amrie, lock the kist,
Else some gear may weel be mist;
Donald Caird finds orra things
Where Allan Gregor fand the tings;
Dunts of kebbuck, taits o' woo,
Whiles a hen and whiles a sow,
Webs or duds frae hedge or yard—
'Ware the wuddie, Donald Caird!

Donald Caird's come again!
Donald Caird's come again!
Dinna let the Shirra ken
Donald Caird's come again.

On Donald Caird the doom was stern,
Craig to tether, legs to airn;
But Donald Caird, wi' mickle study,
Caught the gift to cheat the wuddie;
Rings of airn, and bolts of steel,
Fell like ice frae hand and heel!
Watch the sheep in fauld and glen,
Donald Caird's come again!

Donald Caird's come again!
Donald Caird's come again!
Dinna let the Justice ken
Donald Caird's come again.

EPITAPH ON MRS. ERSKINE.

[1819.]

PLAIN, as her native dignity of mind,
Arise the tomb of her we have resign'd;
Unflaw'd and stainless be the marble scroll,
Emblem of lovely form and candid soul.
But, oh! what symbol may avail, to tell
The kindness, wit, and sense we loved so well! [life,
What sculpture show the broken ties of
Here buried with the parent, friend, and wife!
Or on the tablet stamp each title dear,
By which thine urn, EUPHEMIA, claims the tear! [assume
Yet taught, by thy meek sufferance, to
Patience in anguish, hope beyond the tomb, [shall flow,
Resign'd, though sad, this votive verse
And brief, alas! as thy brief span below.

ON ETTRICK FOREST'S MOUNTAINS DUN.

[1822.]

ON Ettrick Forest's mountains dun,
'Tis blithe to hear the sportsman's gun,
And seek the heath-frequenting brood
Far through the noonday solitude;
By many a cairn and trenchèd mound,
Where chiefs of yore sleep lone and sound,
And springs, where grey-hair'd shepherds
That still the fairies love to dwell. [tell,

Along the silver streams of Tweed,
'Tis blithe the mimic fly to lead,
When to the hook the salmon springs,
And the line whistles through the rings;
The boiling eddy see him try,
Then dashing from the current high,
Till watchful eye and cautious hand
Have led his wasted strength to land.

'Tis blithe along the midnight tide,
With stalwart arm the boat to guide;
On high the dazzling blaze to rear,
And heedful plunge the barbèd spear;
Rock, wood, and scaur, emerging bright,
Fling on the stream their ruddy light,
And from the bank our band appears
Like Genii, arm'd with fiery spears.

'Tis blithe at eve to tell the tale,
How we succeed, and how we fail,
Whether at Alwyn's† lordly meal,
Or lowlier board of Ashestiel;
While the gay tapers cheerly shine,
Bickers the fire, and flows the wine—
Days free from thought, and nights from care,
My blessing on the Forest fair! [care,

THE MAID OF ISLA.

AIR—*The Maid of Isla.*

WRITTEN FOR MR. GEORGE THOMSON'S SCOTTISH MELODIES.

[1822.]

OH, Maid of Isla, from the cliff,
That looks on troubled wave and sky,
Dost thou not see yon little skiff
Contend with ocean gallantly?
Now beating 'gainst the breeze and surge,
And steep'd her leeward deck in foam,
Why does she war unequal urge?—
Oh, Isla's maid, she seeks her home.

Oh, Isla's maid, yon sea-bird mark,
Her white wing gleams through mist and spray,
Against the storm-cloud, lowering dark,
As to the rock she wheels away;—

† *Awlyn*, the seat of Lord Somerville.

Where clouds are dark and billows rave,
Why to the shelter should she come
Of cliff, exposed to wind and wave?—
Oh, maid of Isla, 'tis her home!

As breeze and tide to yonder skiff,
Thou'rt adverse to the suit I bring,
And cold as is yon wintry cliff,
Where sea-birds close their wearied wing.
Yet cold as rock, unkind as wave,
Still, Isla's maid, to thee I come;
For in thy love, or in his grave,
Must Allan Vourich find his home.

CARLE, NOW THE KING'S COME.†

BEING NEW WORDS TO AN AULD SPRING.

[1822.]

The news has flown frae mouth to mouth,
The North for ance has bang'd the South;
The deil a Scotsman's die of drouth,
Carle, now the King's come!

CHORUS.

Carle, now the King's come!
Carle, now the King's come!
Thou shalt dance, and I will sing,
Carle, now the King's come!

Auld England held him lang and fast;
And Ireland had a joyfu' cast;
But Scotland's turn is come at last—
Carle, now the King's come!

Auld Reekie, in her rokelay grey,
Thought never to have seen the day;
He's been a weary time away—
But, Carle, now the King's come!

She's skirling frae the Castle-hill;
The Carline's voice is grown sae shrill,
Ye'll hear her at the Canon-mill—
Carle, now the King's come!

"Up, bairns!" she cries, "baith grit and sma',
And busk ye for the weapon-shaw!
Stand by me, and we'll bang them a'—
Carle, now the King's come!

"Come from Newbattle's ancient spires,
Bauld Lothian, with your knights and squires,
And match the mettle of your sires—
Carle, now the King's come!

"You're welcome hame, my Montagu!
Bring in your hand the young Buccleuch;
I'm missing some that I may rue—
Carle, now the King's come!

"Come, Haddington, the kind and gay,
You've graced my causeway mony a day;
I'll weep the cause if you should stay—
Carle, now the King's come!

"Come, premier Duke,† and carry doun
Frae yonder craig his ancient croun;
It's had a lang sleep and a soun'—
But, Carle, now the King's come!

"Come, Athole, from the hill and wood,
Bring down your clansmen like a clud;
Come, Morton, show the Douglas' blood,—
Carle, now the King's come!

"Come, Tweeddale, true as sword to sheath,
Come, Hopetoun, fear'd on fields of death;
Come, Clerk,‡ and give your bugle breath;
Carle, now the King's come!

"Come, Wemyss, who modest merit aids;
Come, Roseberry, from Dalmeny shades;
Breadalbane, bring your belted plaids;
Carle, now the King's come!

"Come, stately Niddrie, auld and true,
Girt with the sword that Minden knew;
We have o'er few such lairds as you—
Carle, now the King's come!

"King Arthur's grown a common crier,
He's heard in Fife and far Cantire,—
'Fie, lads, behold my crest of fire!'
Carle, now the King's come!

"Saint Abb roars out, 'I see him pass,
Between Tantallon and the Bass!'
Calton, get out your keeking glass—
Carle, now the King's come!"

The Carline stopped; and, sure I am,
For very glee had ta'en a dwam,
But Oman§ help'd her to a dram.—
Cogie, now the King's come!

Cogie, now the King's come!
Cogie, now the King's come!
I'se be fou and ye's be toom,
Cogie, now the King's come!

PART SECOND.

A Hawick gill of mountain dew,
Heised up Auld Reekie's heart, I trow,
It minded her of Waterloo—
Carle, now the King's come!

---

† An imitation of an old Jacobite ditty, written on the arrival of George IV. in Scotland, August, 1822, and printed as a broadside.

† The Duke of Hamilton, the premier duke of Scotland.

‡ The Baron of Pennycuik, bound by his tenure to meet the sovereign whenever he or she visits Edinburgh at the Harestone, and there blow three blasts on a horn.

§ The landlord of the Waterloo Hotel.

Again I heard her summons swell,
For, sic a dirdum and a yell,
It drown'd Saint Giles's jowing bell—
Carle, now the King's come!

"My trusty Provost, tried and tight,
Stand forward for the Good Town's right,
There's waur than you been made a knight†—
Carle, now the King's come!

"My reverend Clergy, look ye say
The best of thanksgivings ye ha'e,
And warstle for a sunny day—
Carle, now the King's come!

"My Doctors, look that you agree,
Cure a' the town without a fee;
My Lawyers, dinna pike a plea—
Carle, now the King's come!

"Come forth each sturdy Burgher's bairn,
That dints on wood or clanks on airn,
That fires the o'en, or winds the pirn—
Carle, now the King's come!

"Come forward with the Blanket Blue,‡
Your sires were loyal men and true,
As Scotland's foemen oft might rue—
Carle, now the King's come!

"Scots downa loup, and rin and rave,
We're steady folks and something grave,
We'll keep the causeway firm and brave—
Carle, now the King's come!

"Sir Thomas,§ thunder from your rock,
Till Pentland dinnles wi' the shock,
And lace wi' fire my snood o' smoke—
Carle, now the King's come!

"Melville, bring out your bands of blue,
A' Louden lads, baith stout and true,
With Elcho, Hope, and Cockburn, too—
Carle, now the King's come!

"And you, who on yon bluidy braes
Compell'd the vanquish'd Despot's praise,
Rank out—rank out—my gallant Greys‖—
Carle, now the King's come!

"Cock o' the North, my Huntly bra',
Where are you with the Forty-twa?

Ah! wae's my heart that ye're awa'—
Carle, now the King's come!

"But yonder come my canty Celts,
With durk and pistols at their belts,
Thank God, we've still some plaids and kilts—
Carle, now the King's come!

"Lord, how the pibrochs groan and yell!
Macdonnel's ta'en the field himsell,
Macleod comes branking o'er the fell—
Carle, now the King's come!

"Bend up your bow, each Archer spark,
For you're to guard him light and dark;
Faith, lads, for ance ye've hit the mark—
Carle, now the King's come!

Young Errol, take the sword of state,
The sceptre, Panie-Morarchate;
Knight Mareschal, see ye clear the gate—
Carle, now the King's come!

"Kind cummer, Leith, ye've been misset,
But dinna be upon the fret—
Ye'se hae the handsel of him yet,
Carle, now the King's come!

"My daughters, come with een sae blue,
Your garlands weave, your blossoms strew;
He ne'er saw fairer flowers than you—
Carle, now the King's come!

"What shall we do for the propine—
We used to offer something fine,
But ne'er a groat's in pouch of mine—
Carle, now the King's come!

"Deil care—for that I'se never start,
We'll welcome him with Highland heart;
Whate'er we have he's get a part—
Carle, now the King's come!

"I'll show him mason-work this day—
Nane of your bricks of Babel clay,
But towers shall stand till Time's away—
Carle, now the King's come!

I'll show him wit, I'll show him lair,
And gallant lads and lasses fair,
And what wad kind heart wish for mair?—
Carle, now the King's come!

"Step out, Sir John,† of projects rife,
Come win the thanks of an auld wife,
And bring him heath and length of life—
Carle, now the King's come!"

† The Lord Provost had the agreeable surprise of hearing his health proposed, at the civic banquet given to George IV. in the Parliament House, as "Sir William Arbuthnot, Bart."

‡ A Blue Blanket is the standard of the incorporated trades of Edinburgh.

§ Sir Thomas Bradford, then commander of the forces in Scotland.

‖ The Scots Greys.

† Sir John Sinclair, Bart., father of the celebrated writer, Catherine Sinclair.

LINES,
ADDRESSED
TO MONSIEUR ALEXANDRE,†
THE CELEBRATED VENTRILOQUIST.

[1824.]

Of yore, in old England, it was not thought good
To carry two visages under one hood;
What should folk say to *you?* who have faces such plenty,
That from under one hood you last night show'd us twenty!
Stand forth, arch deceiver, and tell us in truth, [youth?
Are you handsome or ugly, in age or in
Man, woman, or child—a dog or a mouse?
Or are you, at once, each live thing in the house?
Each live thing, did I ask?—each dead implement, too,
A workshop in your person,—saw, chisel, and screw!
Above all, are you one individual? I know
You must be at least Alexandre and Co.
But I think you're a troop—an assemblage—a mob, [the job;
And that I, as the Sheriff, should take up
And instead of rehearsing your wonders in verse, [disperse.
Must read you the Riot Act, and bid you

THE DEATH OF KEELDAR.

These stanzas were written for Hood's "Gem," 1828, and accompanied an engraving from Cooper's painting of the Death of Keeldar.

Up rose the sun o'er moor and mead;
Up with the sun rose Percy Rede;
Brave Keeldar, from his couples freed,
Career'd along the lea;
The palfrey sprung with sprightly bound,
As if to match the gamesome hound;
His horn the gallant huntsman wound:
They were a jovial three!

Man, hound, or horse, of higher fame,
To wake the wild deer never came,
Since Alnwick's Earl pursued the game
On Cheviot's rueful day;
Keeldar was matchless in his speed,
Than Tarras, ne'er was stauncher steed,
A peerless Archer, Percy Rede:
And right dear friends were they.

The chase engrossed their joys and woes,
Together at the dawn they rose,
Together shared the noon's repose,
By fountain or by stream;
And oft, when evening skies were red,
The heather was their common bed,
When each, as wildering fancy led,
Still hunted in his dream.

Now is the thrilling moment near,
Of sylvan hope and sylvan fear,
Yon thicket holds the harbour'd deer,
The signs the hunters know;—
With eyes of flame, and quivering ears,
The brake sagacious Keeldar nears;
The restless palfrey paws and rears;
The archer strings his bow.

The game's afoot!—Halloo! Halloo!
Hunter, and horse, and hound pursue:—
But woe the shaft that erring flew—
That e'er it left the string!
And ill betide the faithless yew!
The stag bounds scathless o'er the dew,
And gallant Keeldar's life-blood true
Has drench'd the grey-goose wing.

The noble hound—he dies, he dies,
Death, death has glazed his fixèd eyes,
Stiff on the bloody heath he lies,
Without a groan or quiver.
Now day may break and bugle sound,
And whoop and halloo ring around,
And o'er his couch the stag may bound,
But Keeldar sleeps for ever.

Dilated nostrils, staring eyes,
Mark the poor palfrey's mute surprise,
He knows not that his comrade dies,
Nor what is death—but still
His aspect hath expression drear
Of grief and wonder, mixed with fear,
Like startled children when they hear
Some mystic tale of ill.

But he that bent the fatal bow,
Can well the sum of evil know,
And o'er his favourite, bending low,
In speechless grief recline,
Can think he hears the senseless clay
In unreproachful accents say,
"The hand that took my life away,
Dear master, was it thine?

† "When Monsieur Alexandre, the celebrated ventriloquist, was in Scotland, in 1824, he paid a visit to Abbotsford, where he entertained his distinguished host and the other visitors with his unrivalled imitations. Next morning, when he was about to depart, Sir Walter felt a good deal embarrassed as to the sort of acknowledgment he should offer; but at length, resolving that it would probably be most agreeable to the young foreigner to be paid in professional coin, if in any, he stepped aside for a few minutes, and, on returning, presented him with this epigram." The lines were published in the *Edinburgh Annual Register* for 1824.

"And if it be, the shaft be bless'd,
Which sure some erring aim address'd,
Since in your service, prized, caress'd,
I in your service die;
And you may have a fleeter hound,
To match the dun-deer's merry bound,
But by your couch will ne'er be found
So true a guard as I."

And to his last stout Percy rued,
The fatal chance; for when he stood
'Gainst fearful odds in deadly feud,
And fell amid the fray,
E'en with his dying voice he cried,
"Had Keeldar but been at my side,
Your treacherous ambush had been spied—
I had not died to-day!"

Remembrance of the erring bow [flow,
Long since had joined the tides which
Conveying human bliss or woe
Down dark oblivion's river;
But Art can Time's stern doom arrest,
And snatch his spoil from Lethe's breast,
And, in her Cooper's colours drest,
The scene shall live for ever.

INSCRIPTION

FOR THE MONUMENT OF THE REV. GEORGE SCOTT.

[1830.]

To youth, to age, alike, this tablet pale
Tells the brief moral of its tragic tale.
Art thou a parent?—Reverence this bier—
The parents' fondest hopes lie buried here.
Art thou a youth, prepared on life to start,
With opening talents and a generous heart,
Fair hopes and flattering prospects all
thine own?—
Lo! here their end—a monumental stone!
But let submission tame each sorrowing
thought, [was fought.
Heaven crown'd its champion ere the fight

THE FORAY.

[1830.]

THE last of our steers on our board has
been spread, [red;
And the last flask of wine in our goblet is
Up! up, my brave kinsmen! belt swords,
and begone!— [spoil to be won.
There are dangers to dare, and there's

The eyes, that so lately mix'd glances
with ours, [from the towers,
For a space must be dim, as they gaze
And strive to distinguish, through tempest
and gloom, [the plume.
The prance of the steed, and the toss of

The rain is descending, the wind rises
loud; [with a cloud;
And the moon her red beacon has veil'd
'Tis the better, my mates! for the warder's
dull eye [are nigh.
Shall in confidence slumber, nor dream we

Our steeds are impatient! I hear my blithe
Grey! [his neigh;
There is life in his hoof-clang, and hope in
Like the flash of a meteor, the glance of
his mane [darkness and rain.
Shall marshal your march through the

The drawbridge has dropped, the bugle
has blown; [and begone!—
One pledge is to quaff yet—then mount
To their honour and peace, that shall rest
with the slain! [Teviot again!
To their health and their glee, that see

FAREWELL TO THE MUSE.

[1822.]

ENCHANTRESS, farewell, who so oft has
decoy'd me, [woodlands to roam,
At the close of the evening through
Where the forester, lated, with wonder
espied me [for home.
Explore the wild scenes he was quitting
Farewell, and take with thee thy numbers
wild speaking [woe:
The language alternate of rapture and
Oh! none but some lover, whose heart-
strings are breaking, [know.
The pang that I feel at our parting can

Each joy thou couldst double, and when
there came sorrow, [way,
Or pale disappointment, to darken my
What voice was like thine, that could sing
of to-morrow, [to-day!
Till forgot in the strain was the grief of
But when friends drop around us in life's
weary waning, [canst not assuage;
The grief, Queen of Numbers, thou
Nor the gradual estrangement of those
yet remaining, [of age,
The languor of pain, and the chillness

'Twas thou that once taught me, in accents
bewailing, [the plain,
To sing how a warrior lay stretched on
And a maiden hung o'er him with aid un-
availing, [vain:
And held to his lips the cold goblet in
As vain thy enchantments, O Queen of
wild Numbers, [is o'er,
To a bard when the reign of his fancy
And the quick pulse of feeling in apathy
slumbers— [thee no more!
Farewell, then, Enchantress! I meet

HALIDON HILL;

A DRAMATIC SKETCH FROM SCOTTISH HISTORY.

Preface.

THE subject is to be found in Scottish history; but not to overload so slight a publication with antiquarian research, or quotations from obscure chronicles, it may be sufficient to refer the reader to PINKERTON'S *History of Scotland*, vol. i., p. 72.

The Regent of the sketch is a character purely imaginary. The tradition of the Swinton family, which still survives in a lineal descent, and to which the author has the honour to be related, avers that the Swinton who fell at Homildon had slain Gordon's father; which seems sufficient ground for adopting that circumstance into the following dramatic sketch, though it is rendered improbable by other authorities.

If any reader will take the trouble of looking at Froissart, Fordun, or other historians of the period, he will find that the character of the Lord of Swinton for strength, courage, and conduct is by no means exaggerated.

ABBOTSFORD, 1822. W. S.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

SCOTTISH.

THE REGENT OF SCOTLAND.

GORDON, SWINTON, LENNOX, SUTHERLAND, ROSS, MAXWELL, JOHNSTONE, LINDESAY, — *Scottish Chiefs and Nobles.*

ADAM DE VIPONT, *a Knight Templar.*
THE PRIOR OF MAISON-DIEU.
REYNALD, *Swinton's Squire.*
HOB HATTELY, *a Border Moss-Trooper.*
Heralds.

ENGLISH.

KING EDWARD III.

CHANDOS, PERCY, RIBAUMONT, — *English and Norman Nobles.*

THE ABBOT OF WALTHAMSTOW.

ACT I.—SCENE I.

The northern side of the eminence of Halidon. The back Scene represents the summit of the ascent, occupied by the Rear-guard of the Scottish army. Bodies of armed Men appear as advancing from different points to join the main Body.

Enter DE VIPONT *and the* PRIOR OF MAISON-DIEU.

VIP. No farther, Father—here I need no guidance—
I have already brought your peaceful step
Too near the verge of battle.

PRI. Fain would I see you join some Baron's banner, [sword
Before I say farewell. The honour'd
That fought so well in Syria, should not
Amid the ignoble crowd. [wave
VIP. Each spot is noble in a pitchèd field, [on't.
So that a man has room to fight and fall
But I shall find out friends. 'Tis scarce
twelve years [lestine,
Since I left Scotland for the wars of Pa-
And then the flower of all the Scottish nobles
Were known to me; and I, in my degree,
Not all unknown to them.

PRI. Alas! there have been changes since that time! [glas, Grahame,
The Royal Bruce, with Randolph, Dou-
Then shook in field the banners which now moulder
Over their graves i' the chancel.
VIP. And thence comes it,
That while I look'd on many a well-known crest [came,
And blazon'd shield, as hitherward we
The faces of the Barons who display'd them [they seem'd;
Were all unknown to me. Brave youths
Yet, surely, fitter to adorn the tilt-yard,
Than to be leaders of a war. Their followers, [selves unpractised—
Young like themselves, seem like them-
Look at their battle-rank.
PRI. I cannot gaze on't with undazzled eye, [and helmet,
So thick the rays dart back from shield
And sword and battle-axe, and spear and pennon. [self
Sure 'tis a gallant show! The Bruce him-
Hath often conquer'd at the head of fewer
And worse appointed followers.
VIP. Ay, but 'twas Bruce that led them. Reverend Father, [combat;
'Tis not the falchion's weight decides a
It is the strong and skilful hand that wields it. [King,
Ill fate, that we should lack the noble
And all his champions now! Time call'd them not,
For when I parted hence for Palestine,
The brows of most were free from grizzled hair. [know, in Scotland
PRI. Too true, alas! But well you
Few hairs are silver'd underneath the helmet; ['Mongst the laity,
'Tis cowls like mine which hide them.
War's the rash reaper, who thrusts in his sickle [years
Before the grain is white. In threescore
And ten, which I have seen, I have outlived
Well-nigh two generations of our nobles.
The race which holds yon summit is the third.
VIP. Thou mayst outlive them also.
PRI. Heaven forfend!
My prayer shall be, that Heaven will close my eyes,
Before they look upon the wrath to come.
VIP. Retire, retire, good Father!—Pray for Scotland—
Think not on me. Here comes an ancient friend,
Brother in arms, with whom to-day I'll join me.
Back to your choir, assemble all your brotherhood, [victory.
And weary Heaven with prayers for
PRI. Heaven's blessing rest with thee,
Champion of Heaven, and of thy suffering country!
[*Exit* PRIOR. VIPONT *draws a little aside and lets down the beaver of his helmet.*]

Enter SWINTON, *followed by* REYNALD *and others, to whom he speaks as he enters.*

SWI. Halt here, and plant my pennon, till the Regent
Assign our band its station in the host.
REY. That must be by the Standard. We have had [at least.
That right since good Saint David's reign
Fain would I see the Marcher would dispute it. [general plants the soldier,
SWI. Peace, Reynald! Where the
There is his place of honour, and there only
His valour can win worship. Thou'rt of those [wild semblance
Who would have war's deep art bear the
Of some disordered hunting, where, pell-mell,
Each trusting to the swiftness of his horse,
Gallants press on to see the quarry fall.
Yon steel-clad Southrons, Reynald, are no deer;
And England's Edward is no stag at bay.
VIP. (*advancing*). There needed not, to blazon forth the Swinton,
His ancient burgonet, the sable Boar
Chain'd to the gnarl'd oak,—nor his proud step,
Nor giant stature, nor the ponderous mace,
Which only he, of Scotland's realm, can wield:
His discipline and wisdom mark the leader,
As doth his frame the champion. Hail, brave Swinton!
SWI. Brave Templar, thanks! Such your cross'd shoulder speaks you;
But the closed visor which conceals your features [perhaps—
Forbids more knowledge. Umfraville
VIP. (*unclosing his helmet*). No; one less worthy of our sacred Order.
Yet, unless Syrian suns have scorch'd my features
Swart as my sable visor, Alan Swinton
Will welcome Symon Vipont.
SWI. (*embracing him*). As the blithe reaper [ripe harvest
Welcomes a practised mate, when the
Lies deep before him, and the sun is high!

Thou'lt follow yon old pennon, wilt thou not?
'Tis tatter'd since thou saw'st it, and the Boar-heads [board,
Look as if brought from off some Christmas
Where knives had notch'd them deeply.
VIP. Have with them, ne'ertheless.
The Stuart's Chequer, [Lymphads,
The Bloody Heart of Douglas, Ross's
Sutherland's Wild-cats, nor the royal Lion, [them.
Rampant in golden tressure, wins me from
We'll back the Boar-heads bravely. I see round them [known to me.
A chosen band of lances—some well
Where's the main body of thy followers?
SWI. Symon de Vipont, thou dost see them all [battle,
That Swinton's bugle-horn can call to
However loud it rings. There's not a boy
Left in my halls, whose arm has strength enough [hind,
To bear a sword—there's not a man be-
However old, who moves without a staff.
Striplings and greybeards, every one is here, [them all;
And here all should be—Scotland needs
And more and better men, were each a Hercules,
And yonder handful centupled.
VIP. A thousand followers—such, with friends and kinsmen,
Allies and vassals, thou wert wont to lead—
A thousand followers shrunk to sixty lances [sons, Sir Alan?
In twelve years' space?—And thy brave
Alas! I fear to ask. [home
SWI. All slain, De Vipont. In my empty
A puny babe lisps to a widow'd mother,
"Where is my grandsire! wherefore do you weep?" [heirless.
But for that prattler, Lyulph's house is
I'm an old oak, from which the foresters
Have hew'd four goodly boughs, and left beside me
Only a sapling, which the fawn may crush
As he springs over it.
VIP. All slain?—alas!
SWI. Ay, all, De Vipont. And their attributes, [with the Axe—
John with the Long Spear—Archibald
Richard the Ready—and my youngest darling, [survive
My Fair-hair'd William—do but now
In measures which the grey-hair'd minstrels sing,
When they make maidens weep.
VIP. These wars with England, they have rooted out [who might win
The flowers of Christendom. Knights,
The sepulchre of Christ from the rude
Fall in unholy warfare! [heathen,
SWI. Unholy warfare? ay, well hast thou named it; [yard shafts
But not with England—would her cloth-
Had bored their cuirasses! Their lives had been [defence
Lost like their grandsire's, in the bold
Of their dear country—but in private feud
With the proud Gordon fell my Long-spear'd John, [Ready,
He with the Axe, and he men call'd the
Ay, and my Fair-hair'd Will—the Gordon's
Devour'd my gallant issue. [wrath
VIP. Since thou dost weep, their death is unavenged? [See yonder rock,
SWI. Templar, what think'st thou me?
From which the fountain gushes—is it less
Compact of adamant, though waters flow from it? [avenged;
Firm hearts have moister eyes.—They *are*
I wept not till they were—till the proud Gordon [sword,
Had with his life-blood dyed my father's
In guerdon that he thinn'd my father's lineage, [Gordon
And then I wept my sons; and, as the
Lay at my feet, there was a tear for him,
Which mingled with the rest. We had been friends, [gether,
Had shared the banquet and the chase to-
Fought side by side,—and our first cause of strife, [one!
Woe to the pride of both, was but a light
VIP. You are at feud, then, with the mighty Gordon? [Border-land,
SWI. At deadly feud. Here in this
Where the sire's quarrels descend upon the son,
As due a part of his inheritance,
As the strong castle and the ancient blazon,
Where private Vengeance holds the scales of justice, [lously
Weighing each drop of blood as scrupu-
As Jews or Lombards balance silver pence,
Not in this land, 'twixt Solway and Saint Abb's,
Rages a bitterer feud than mine and theirs,
The Swinton and the Gordon.
VIP. You, with some threescore lances —and the Gordon
Leading a thousand followers.
SWI. You rate him far too low. Since you sought Palestine, [ships
He hath had grants of baronies and lord-
In the far-distant North. A thousand horse [number'd.
His southern friends and vassals always
Add Badenoch kerne, and horse from Dey and Spey

He'll count a thousand more.—And now, De Vipont,
If the Boar-heads seem in your eyes less worthy [ard—
For lack of followers—seek yonder stand-
The bounding Stag, with a brave host around it; [field,
There the young Gordon makes his earliest
And pants to win his spurs. His father's friend, [pennon,
As well as mine, thou wert—go, join his
And grace him with thy presence.

VIP. When you were friends, I was the friend of both,
And now I can be enemy to neither;
But my poor person, though but slight the aid,
Joins on this field the banner of the two
Which hath the smallest following.

SWI. Spoke like the generous Knight, who gave up all,
Leading and lordship, in a heathen land
To fight, a Christian soldier! Yet, in earnest, [Gordon
I pray, De Vipont, you would join the
In this high battle. 'Tis a noble youth,—
So fame doth vouch him,—amorous, quick, and valiant; [may use
Takes knighthood, too, this day, and well
His spurs too rashly in the wish to win them.
A friend like thee beside him in the fight,
Were worth a hundred spears, to rein his valour [agèd eagle
And temper it with prudence:—'tis the
Teaches his brood to gaze upon the sun,
With eye undazzled.

VIP. Alas! brave Swinton! Wouldst thou train the hunter
That soon must bring thee to the bay? Your custom, [custom,
Your most unchristian, savage, fiend-like
Binds Gordon to avenge his father's death.

SWI. Why, be it so! I look for nothing else:
My part was acted when I slew his father,
Avenging my four sons—Young Gordon's sword, [flict there
If it should find my heart, can ne'er in-
A pang so poignant as his father's did.
But I would perish by a noble hand,
And such will his be if he bear him nobly,
Nobly and wisely on this field of Halidon.

Enter a PURSUIVANT.

PUR. Sir Knights, to council!—'tis the Regent's order, [him instantly
That knights and men of leading meet
Before the royal standard. Edward's army
Is seen from the hill summit.

SWI. Say to the Regent, we obey his orders. [*Exit* PURSUIVANT.
[*To* REYNALD.] Hold thou my casque, and furl my pennon up [crest,
Close to the staff. I will not show my
Nor standard, till the common foe shall challenge them. [Gordon
I'll wake no civil strife, nor tempt the
With aught that's like defiance.

VIP. Will he not know your features?

SWI. He never saw me. In the distant North, [tain'd him
Against his will, 'tis said, his friends de-
During his nurture—caring not, belike,
To trust a pledge so precious near the Boar-tusks.
It was a natural but needless caution;
I wage no war with children, for I think
Too deeply on mine own. [the Gordon

VIP. I have thought on it, and will see
As we go hence to council. I do bear
A cross, which binds me to be Christian priest, [grant,
As well as Christian champion. God may
That I, at once his father's friend and yours,
May make some peace betwixt you.

SWI. When that your priestly zeal, and knightly valour,
Shall force the grave to render up the dead.
[*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE II.

The Summit of Halidon Hill, before the Regent's Tent. The Royal Standard of Scotland is seen in the background, with the Pennons and Banners of the principal Nobles around it.

Council of Scottish Nobles and Chiefs.

SUTHERLAND, ROSS, LENNOX, MAXWELL, *and other Nobles of the highest rank, are close to the* REGENT'S *person, and in the act of keen debate.* VIPONT *with* GORDON *and others remain grouped at some distance on the right hand of the Stage. On the left, standing also apart, is* SWINTON, *alone and bare-headed. The Nobles are dressed in Highland or Lowland habits, as historical costume requires. Trumpets, Heralds, &c., are in attendance.*

LEN. Nay, Lordings, put no shame upon my counsels.
I did but say, if we retired a little,
We should have fairer field and better vantage. [himself—
I've seen King Robert—ay, The Bruce
Retreat six leagues in length, and think no shame on't. [haughty message
REG. Ay, but King Edward sent

Defying us to battle on this field,
This very hill of Halidon; if we leave it
Unfought withal, it squares not with our honour. [allows the enemy,
SWI. (*apart*). A perilous honour that
And such an enemy as this same Edward,
To choose our field of battle! He knows how [master
To make our Scottish pride betray its
Into the pitfall.
[*During this speech the debate among the Nobles is continued.*
SUTH. (*aloud*). We will not back one furlong—not one yard, [foe,
No, nor one inch; where'er we find the
Or where the foe finds us, there will we fight him.
Retreat will dull the spirit of our followers,
Who now stand prompt for battle.
ROSS. My Lords, methinks great Morarchat† has doubts, [seam
That, if his Northern clans once turn the
Of their check'd hose behind, it will be
To halt and rally them. [hard
SUTH. Say'st thou, MacDonnell?—Add another falsehood, [or traitor?
And name when Morarchat was coward
Thine island race, as chronicles can tell,
Were oft affianced to the Southron cause;
Loving the weight and temper of their gold [steel.
More than the weight and temper of their
REG. Peace, my lords, ho.
ROSS. (*throwing down his glove*).
MacDonnell will not peace! There lies my pledge,
Proud Morarchat, to witness thee a liar.
MAX. Brought I all Nithsdale from the Western Border; [England,
Left I my towers exposed to foraying
And thieving Annandale, to see such misrule?
JOHN. Who speaks of Annandale?
Dare Maxwell slander
The gentle House of Lochwood?‡
REG. Peace, Lordings, once again. We represent
The Majesty of Scotland—in our presence
Brawling is treason.
SUTH. Were it in presence of the King himself,
What should prevent my saying——

Enter LINDESAY.

LIN. You must determine quickly. Scarce a mile
Parts our vanguard from Edward's. On the plain [clouds of dust,
Bright gleams of armour flash through
Like stars through frost-mist—steeds neigh, and weapons clash—
And arrows soon will whistle—the worst sound [determine.
That waits on English war.—You must
REG. We are determined. We will spare proud Edward [ward, Lords;
Half of the ground that parts us.—On-Saint Andrew strike for Scotland! We will lead [Standard
The middle ward ourselves, the Royal
Display'd beside us; and beneath its shadow [this day,
Shall the young gallants, whom we knight
Fight for their golden spurs.—Lennox, thou'rt wise, [rear.
And wilt obey command—lead thou the
LEN. The rear?—Why I the rear? The van were fitter [Bruce.
For him who fought abreast with Robert
SWI. (*apart*). Discretion hath forsaken Lennox too! [ing
The wisdom he was forty years in gather-
Has left him in an instant. 'Tis conta-
Even to witness frenzy. [gious
SUTH. The Regent hath determined well. The rear [retreat.
Suits him the best who counselled our
LEN. Proud Northern Thane, the van were soon the rear, [there.
Were thy disordered followers planted
SUTH. Then, for that very word I make a vow, [soul,
By my broad Earldom, and my father's
That, if I have not leading of the van,
I will not fight to-day!
ROSS. Morarchat! thou the leading of the van!
Not whilst MacDonnell lives.
SWI. (*apart*). Nay, then a stone would speak.
[*Addresses the* REGENT.] May't please your Grace, [man's counsel,
And you, great Lords, to hear an old
That hath seen fights enow. These open bickerings [Grace
Dishearten all our host. If that your
With these great Earls and Lords must needs debate, [ment;
Let the closed tent conceal your disagree-
Else 'twill be said, ill fares it with the flock, [nigh.
If shepherds wrangle when the wolf is
REG. The old Knight counsels well. Let every Lord [more,
Or Chief, who leads five hundred men or
Follow to council—others are excluded—

† Morarchat is the ancient Gaelic designation of the Earls of Sutherland.

‡ Lochwood Castle was the ancient seat of the Johnstones, Lords of Annandale.

We'll have no vulgar censurers of our conduct— [*Looking at* SWINTON.
Young Gordon, your high rank and numerous following [knighted.
Give you a seat with us, though yet un-
GORDON. I pray you, pardon me. My youth's unfit [grey hairs
To sit in council, when that Knight's
And wisdom wait without. [you twice.
REG. Do as you will; we deign not bid
[*The* REGENT, ROSS, SUTHERLAND, LENNOX, MAXWELL, *&c., enter the Tent. The rest remain grouped about the Stage.*
GOR. (*observing* SWI.) That helmetless old Knight, his giant stature,
His awful accents of rebuke and wisdom,
Have caught my fancy strangely. He doth seem [dream'd of,
Like to some vision'd form which I have
But never saw with waking eyes till now.
I will accost him.
VIP. Pray you, do not so; [not.
Anon I'll give you reason why you should
There's other work in hand——
GOR. I will but ask his name. There's in his presence [spell,
Something that works upon me like a
Or like the feeling made my childish ear
Dote upon tales of superstitious dread,
Attracting while they chill'd my heart with fear.
Now, born the Gordon, I do feel right well
I'm bound to fear nought earthly—and I fear nought.
I'll know who this man is——
[*Accosts* SWINTON.
Sir Knight, I pray you, of your gentle courtesy, [ashamed,
To tell your honour'd name. I am
Being unknown in arms, to say that mine
Is Adam Gordon.
SWINTON (*shows emotion, but instantly subdues it*). It is a name that soundeth in my ear
Like to a death-knell—ay, and like the call
Of the shrill trumpet to the mortal lists;
Yet, 'tis a name which ne'er hath been dishonour'd,
And never will, I trust—most surely never
By such a youth as thou. [this,
GOR. There's a mysterious courtesy in
And yet it yields no answer to my question.
I trust you hold the Gordon not unworthy
To know the name he asks?
SWI. Worthy of all that openness and honour
May show to friend or foe—but, for my name,
Vipont will show it you; and, if it sounds
Harsh in your ear, remember that it knells there [least,
But at your own request. This day, at
Though seldom wont to keep it in concealment, [heard it.
As there's no cause I should, *you* had not
GOR. This strange——
VIP. The mystery is needful. Follow me. [*They retire behind the side scene.*
SWI. (*looking after them*). 'Tis a brave youth. How blush'd his noble cheek,
While youthful modesty, and the embarrassment
Of curiosity, combined with wonder,
And half-suspicion of some slight intended,
All mingled in the flush: but soon 'twill deepen [Vipont!—
Into revenge's glow. How slow is
I wait the issue, as I've seen spectators
Suspend the motion even of the eyelids,
When the slow gunner, with his lighted match,
Approach'd the chargèd cannon, in the act
To waken its dread slumbers.—Now 'tis out; [me,
He draws his sword, and rushes towards
Who will not seek nor shun him.

Enter GORDON, *withheld by* VIPONT.

VIP. Hold, for the sake of Heaven! O, for the sake
Of your dear country, hold!—Has Swinton slain your father, [parricide,
And must you, therefore, be yourself a
And stand recorded as the selfish traitor,
Who in her hour of need, his country's cause [wrong?
Deserts, that he may wreak a private
Look to yon banner—that is Scotland's standard; [general;
Look to the Regent—he is Scotland's
Look to the English—they are Scotland's foemen! [Scotland,
Bethink thee, then, thou art a son of
And think on nought beside.
GOR. He hath come here to brave me! —Off! unhand me!— [friend,
Thou canst not be my father's ancient
That stand'st 'twixt me and him who slew my father. [one passing thought
VIP. You know not Swinton. Scarce
Of his high mind was with you; now, his soul [slay him
Is fix'd on this day's battle. You might
At unawares, before he saw your blade drawn,—
Stand still, and watch him close.

Enter MAXWELL *from the tent.*

SWI. How go our councils, Maxwell, may I ask?

MAX. As wild, as if the very wind and sea
With every breeze and every billow
For their precedence. [battled
SWI. Most sure they are possess'd! Some evil spirit, [cretion.
To mock their valour, robs them of dis-
Fie, fie upon 't!—O, that Dunfermline's tomb [red shore
Could render up The Bruce! that Spain's
Could give us back the good Lord James of Douglas! [terror,
Or that fierce Randolph, with his voice of
Were here, to awe these brawlers to submission! [at more leisure now.
VIP. *to* GOR. Thou hast perused him
GOR. I see the giant form which all men speak of,
The stately port—but not the sullen eye,
Not the bloodthirsty look, that should belong [need
To him that made me orphan. I shall
To name my father twice ere I can strike
At such grey hairs, and face of such command;
Yet my hand clenches on my falchion hilt,
In token he shall die.
VIP. Need I again remind you, that the
Permits not private quarrel? [place
GOR. I'm calm. I will not seek—nay, I will shun it— [fashion.
And yet methinks that such debate's the
You've heard how taunts, reproaches, and the lie, [mouth;
The lie itself, have flown from mouth to
As if a band of peasants were disputing
About a foot-ball match, rather than Chiefs
Were ordering a battle. I am young,
And lack experience; tell me, brave De Vipont, [tine?
Is such the fashion of your wars in Pales-
VIP. Such it at times hath been; and then the Cross [cause
Hath sunk before the Crescent. Heaven's
Won us not victory where wisdom was not.—
Behold yon English host come slowly on,
With equal front, rank marshall'd upon rank,
As if one spirit ruled one moving body;
The leaders, in their places, each prepared
To charge, support, and rally, as the fortune [ours,
Of changeful battle needs: then look on
Broken, disjointed, as the tumbling surges
Which the winds wake at random. Look on both,
And dread the issue; yet there might be succour.

GOR. We're fearfully o'ermatch'd in discipline;
So even my inexperienced eye can judge.
What succour save in Heaven?
VIP. Heaven acts by human means. The artist's skill
Supplies in war, as in mechanic crafts,
Deficiency of tools. There's courage, wisdom,
And skill enough, live in one leader here,
As, flung into the balance, might avail
To counterpoise the odds 'twixt that ruled host [name him.
And our wild multitude.—I must not
GOR. I guess, but dare not ask.—What band is yonder, [discipline
Arranged as closely as the English
Hath marshall'd their best files?
VIP. Know'st thou not the pennon?
One day, perhaps, thou 'lt see it all too
It is Sir Alan Swinton's. [closely;—
GOR. These, then, are his,—the relics of his power;
Yet worth an host of ordinary men.—
And I must slay my country's sagest leader, [handful,
And crush by numbers that determined
When most my country needs their practised aid, [Gordon;
Or men will say, "There goes degenerate
His father's blood is on the Swinton's sword,
And his is in his scabbard!" [*Muses.*
VIP. (*apart*). High blood and mettle, mix'd with early wisdom,
Sparkle in this brave youth. If he survive
This evil-omen'd day, I pawn my word,
That, in the ruin which I now forbode,
Scotland has treasure left.—How close he eyes [hate,
Each look and step of Swinton! Is it
Or is it admiration, or are both
Commingled strangely in that steady gaze?
[SWINTON *and* MAXWELL *return from the bottom of the stage.*
MAX. The storm is laid at length amongst these counsellors;
See, they come forth.
SWI. And it is more than time;
For I can mark the vanguard archery
Handling their quivers—bending up their bows.

Enter the REGENT *and Scottish Lords.*

REG. Thus shall it be, then, since we may no better, [way
And, since no Lord will yield one jot of
To this high urgency, or give the vanguard
Up to another's guidance, we will abide them

Even on this bent; and as our troops are rank'd,
So shall they meet the foe. Chief, nor Thane, [dence
Nor Noble, can complain of the prece-
Which chance has thus assign'd him.
SWI. (*apart*). O, sage discipline,
That leaves to chance the marshalling of a battle!
GOR. Move him to speech, De Vipont.
VIP. Move *him!*—Move whom?
GOR. Even him, whom, but brief space since,
My hand did burn to put to utter silence.
VIP. I'll move it to him.—Swinton, speak to them;
They lack thy counsel sorely.
SWI. Had I the thousand spears which once I led, [wisdom
I had not thus been silent. But men's
Is rated by their means. From the poor leader [weight?
Of sixty lances, who seeks words of
GOR. (*steps forward*). Swinton, there's that of wisdom on thy brow,
And valour in thine eye, and that of peril
In this most urgent hour, that bids me say,— [speak,
Bids me, thy mortal foe, say,—Swinton,
For King and Country's sake.
SWI. Nay, if that voice commands me, speak I will;
It sounds as if the dead lays charge on me.
REG. (*to* LENNOX, *with whom he has been consulting*). 'Tis better than you think. This broad hill-side
Affords fair compass for our power's display,
Rank above rank rising in seemly tiers;
So that the rearward stands as fair and open—— [English archer.
SWI. As e'er stood mark before an
REG. Who dares to say so?—Who is't
Our rule of discipline? [dare impeach
SWI. A poor Knight of these Marches, good my Lord; [here,
Alan of Swinton, who hath kept a house
He and his ancestry, since the old days
Of Malcolm, called the Maiden.
REG. You have brought here, even to this pitchèd field,
In which the Royal Banner is display'd,
I think some sixty spears, Sir Knight of
Our musters name no more. [Swinton;
SWI. I brought each man I had; and Chief, or Earl, [more:
Thane, Duke, or dignitary, brings no
And with them brought I what may here be useful— [Scotland,
An agèd eye; which, what in England, Spain, France, and Flanders, hath seen fifty battles, [stark hand too,
And ta'en some judgment of them; a
Which plays as with a straw with this same mace,— [more lightly,
Which if a young arm here can wield
I never more will offer word of counsel.
LEN. Hear him, my Lord; it is the noble Swinton—
He hath had high experience.
MAX. He is noted
The wisest warrior 'twixt the Tweed and
I do beseech you, hear him. [Solway,—
JOHN. Ay, hear the Swinton—hear stout old Sir Alan; [once.
Maxwell and Johnstone both agree for
REG. Where's your impatience now?
Late you were all for battle, would not hear [gaze
Ourself pronounce a word—and now you
On yon old warrior, in his antique armour,
As if he were arisen from the dead,
To bring us Bruce's counsel for the battle. [he who fought
SWI. 'Tis a proud word to speak; but
Long under Robert Bruce, may something guess,
Without communication with the dead,
At what he would have counsell'd.—Bruce had bidden ye [broadly
Review your battle-order, marshall'd
Here on the bare hill-side, and bidden you mark [down
Yon clouds of Southron archers, bearing
To the green meadow-lands which stretch beneath— [to-day
The Bruce had warn'd you, not a shaft
But shall find mark within a Scottish bosom, [boys,
If thus our field be order'd. The callow
Who draw but four-foot bows, shall gall our front, [rear,
While on our mainward, and upon the
The cloth-yard shafts shall fall like death's own darts, [find a mark.
And, though blind men discharge them,
Thus shall we die the death of slaughter'd deer, [ease
Which, driven into the toils, are shot at
By boys and women, while they toss aloft
All idly and in vain their branchy horns,
As we shall shake our unavailing spears.
REG. Tush, tell not me! If their shot fall like hail,
Our men have Milan coats to bear it out.
SWI. Never did armourer temper steel on stithy [arrow;
That made sure fence against an English
A cobweb gossamer were guard as good
Against a wasp-sting.

REG. Who fears a wasp-sting?
SWI. I, my Lord, fear none;
Yet should a wise man brush the insect off,
Or he may smart for it.
REG. We'll keep the hill; it is the vantage-ground
When the main battle joins.
SWI. It ne'er will join, while their light archery [horse.
Can foil our spearmen and our barbèd
To hope Plantagenet would seek close combat
When he can conquer riskless, is to deem
Sagacious Edward simpler than a babe
In battle-knowledge. Keep the hill, my Lord,
With the main body, if it is your pleasure;
But let a body of your chosen horse
Make execution on yon waspish archers.
I've done such work before, and love it well;
If 'tis your pleasure to give me the leading,
The dames of Sherwood, Inglewood, and Wearedale, [venison,
Shall sit in widowhood and long for
And long in vain. Whoe'er remembers Bannockburn,— [loud trumpet,
And when shall Scotsman, till the last
Forget that stirring word!—knows *that* great battle
Even thus was fought and won.
LEN. This is the shortest road to bandy blows; [back,
For when the bills step forth and bows go
Then is the moment that our hardy spearmen, [born hearts,
With their strong bodies, and their stub-
And limbs well knit by mountain exercise,
At the close tug shall foil the short-breath'd Southron. [won;
SWI. I do not say the field will thus be
The English host is numerous, brave, and loyal; [art,
Their Monarch most accomplish'd in war's
Skill'd, resolute, and wary—— [victory,
REG. And if your scheme secure not
What does it promise us?
SWI. This much at least,—
Darkling we shall not die: the peasant's shaft, [purpose,
Loosen'd perchance without an aim or
Shall not drink up the life-blood we derive
From those famed ancestors, who made their breasts [years.
This frontier's barrier for a thousand
We'll meet these Southron bravely hand to hand, [weapon;
And eye to eye, and weapon against
Each man who falls shall see the foe who strikes him.
While our good blades are faithful to the hilts,
And our good hands to these good blades are faithful, [avenged—
Blow shall meet blow, and none fall un-
We shall not bleed alone.
REG. And this is all
Your wisdom hath devised?
SWI. Not all; for I would pray you,
noble Lords
(If one, among the guilty guiltiest, might),
For this one day to charm to ten hours' rest
The never-dying worm of deadly feud,
That gnaws our vexèd hearts—think no one foe [remain,
Save Edward and his host:—days will
Ay, days by far too many will remain,
To avenge old feuds or struggles for precedence;— [self,
Let this one day be Scotland's.—For my-
If there is any here may claim from me
(As well may chance) a debt of blood and hatred,
My life is his to-morrow unresisting,
So he to-day will let me do the best
That my old arm may achieve for the dear country
That's mother to us both.
[GORDON *shows much emotion during this and the preceding speech of* SWINTON.
REG. It is a dream—a vision!—if one troop [follow,
Rush down upon the archers, all will
And order is destroyed—we'll keep the battle-rank [Ho!
Our fathers wont to do. No more on't.—
Where be those youths seek knighthood from our sword?
HER. Here are the Gordon, Somerville, and Hay, [more.
And Hepburn, with a score of gallants
REG. Gordon, stand forth.
GOR. I pray your Grace forgive me.
REG. How! seek you not for knighthood?
GOR. I do thirst for't.
But, pardon me—'tis from another sword.
REG. It is your Sovereign's—seek you for a worthier?
GOR. Who would drink purely, seeks the secret fountain,
How small soever—not the general stream,
Though it be deep and wide. My Lord, I seek [our'd weapon
The boon of knighthood from the hon-
Of the best knight, and of the sagest leader,
That ever graced a ring of chivalry.

—Therefore, I beg the boon on bended knee,
Even from Sir Alan Swinton. [*Kneels*
REG. Degenerate boy! Abject at once and insolent!— [father!
See, Lords, he kneels to him that slew his
GOR. (*starting up*). Shame be on him who speaks such shameful word!
Shame be on him, whose tongue would sow dissension, [Scotsmen
When most the time demands that native
Forget each private wrong!
SWI. (*interrupting him*). Youth, since you crave me
To be your sire in chivalry, I remind you
War has its duties, Office has its reverence; [Sovereign;
Who governs in the Sovereign's name is
Crave the Lord Regent's pardon.
GOR. You task me justly, and I crave his pardon, [*Bows to the Regent.*
His and these noble Lords'; and pray them all [presence,
Bear witness to my words.—Ye noble
Here I remit unto the Knight of Swinton
All bitter memory of my father's slaughter,
All thoughts of malice, hatred, and revenge;
By no base fear or composition moved,
But by the thought that in our country's battle [him
All hearts should be as one. I do forgive
As freely as I pray to be forgiven,
And once more kneel to him to sue for knighthood.
SWI. (*affected, and drawing his sword*).
Alas! brave youth, 'tis I should kneel to you, [sword
And, tendering thee the hilt of the fell
That made thee fatherless, bid thee use the point [boon—
After thine own discretion. For thy
Trumpets, be ready—In the Holiest name,
And in Our Lady's and Saint Andrew's name,
[*Touching his shoulder with his sword.*
I dub thee Knight!—Arise, Sir Adam Gordon!
Be faithful, brave, and O, be fortunate,
Should this ill hour permit!
(*The trumpets sound; the Heralds cry* "Largesse," *and the Attendants shout* "A Gordon! A Gordon!"
REG. Beggars and flatterers! Peace, peace, I say! [be made
We'll to the Standard; knights shall there
Who will with better reason crave your clamour.
LEN. What of Swinton's counsel?
Here's Maxwell and myself think it worth noting.
REG. (*with concentrated indignation*). Let the best knight, and let the sagest leader— [father—
So Gordon quotes the man who slew his
With his old pedigree and heavy mace,
Essay the adventure if it pleases him,
With his fair threescore horse. As for ourselves,
We will not peril aught upon the measure.
GOR. Lord Regent, you mistake; for if Sir Alan [calls
Shall venture such attack, each man who
The Gordon Chief, and hopes or fears from him
Or good or evil, follows Swinton's banner
In this achievement.
REG. Why, God ha' mercy! This is of a piece. [counsel,
Let young and old e'en follow their own
Since none will list to mine.
ROSS. The Border cockerel fain would be on horseback;
'Tis safe to be prepared for fight or flight:
And this comes of it to give Northern lands
To the false Norman blood.
GOR. Hearken, proud Chief of Isles! Within my stalls [riders
I have two hundred horse; two hundred
Mount guard upon my castle, who would tread [shanks,
Into the dust a thousand of your Red-
Nor count it a day's service.
SWI. Hear I this
From thee, young man, and on the day of
And to the brave MacDonnell? [battle?
GOR. 'Twas he that urged me; but I am rebuked. [to his master!†
REG. He crouches like a leash-hound
SWI. Each hound must do so that would head the deer— [master.
'Tis mongrel curs that snatch at mate or
REG. Too much of this. Sirs, to the Royal Standard! [David.
I bid you, in the name of good King
Sound trumpets—sound for Scotland and King David!
[*The* REGENT *and the rest go off; and the Scene closes. Manent* GORDON, SWINTON, *and* VIPONT, *with* REYNALD *and followers.* LENNOX *follows the* REGENT; *but returns, and addresses* SWINTON.
LEN. O, were my western horsemen but come up,

† The laws of chivalry demanded this submission to a father in chivalry.

I would take part with you!
SWI. Better that you remain;
They lack discretion; such grey head as
May best supply that want. [yours
Lennox, mine ancient friend, and honour'd
Farewell, I think, for ever! [lord,
LEN. Farewell, brave friend!—and fare-
well, noble Gordon,
Whose sun will be eclipsed even as it rises!—
The Regent will not aid you.
SWI. We will so bear us, that as soon
the bloodhound [his comrade
Shall halt, and take no part, what time
Is grappling with the deer, as he stand
And see us overmatch'd. [still,
LEN. Alas! thou dost not know how
mean his pride is,
How strong his envy.
SWI. Then we will die, and leave the
shame with him. [*Exit* LENNOX.
VIP. (*to* GORDON). What ails thee,
noble youth? What means this
pause?
Thou dost not rue thy generosity?
GOR. I have been hurried on by strong
impulse,
Like to a bark that scuds before the storm,
Till driven upon some strange and distant
coast, [not forgiven?
Which never pilot dream'd of.—Have I
And am I not still fatherless?
SWI. Gordon, no;
For while we live I am a father to thee.
GOR. Thou, Swinton?—no!—that can-
not, cannot be.
SWI. Then change the phrase, and say,
that while we live, [fatherless,
Gordon shall be my son. If thou art
Am I not childless too? Bethink thee,
Gordon, [hold fire,
Our death-feud was not like the house-
Which the poor peasant hides among its
embers, [ing.
To smoulder on, and wait a time for wak-
Ours was the conflagration of the forest,
Which, in its fury, spares nor sprout nor
stem, [guish'd,
Hoar oak, nor sapling—not to be extin-
Till Heaven, in mercy, sends down all her
waters; [for ever;
But, once subdued, its flame is quench'd
And spring shall hide the tract of devasta-
tion, thy hand.
With foliage and with flowers.—Give me
GOR. My hand and heart!—And freely
now!—to fight!
VIP. How will you act? [*To* SWINTON.]
The Gordon's band and thine
Are in the rearward left, I think, in
scorn—
I'll post for them who wish to charge the
foremost!
SWI. We'll turn that scorn to vantage,
and descend [there must be—
Sidelong the hill—some winding path
O, for a well-skill'd guide!
[HOB HATTELY *starts up from a thicket.*
HOB. So here he stands.—An ancient
friend, Sir Alan.
Hob Hattely, or, if you like it better,
Hob of the Heron Plume, here stands
your guide. [rious knave,
SWI. An ancient friend?—a most noto-
Whose throat I've destin'd to the dodder'd
oak [more.
Before my castle, these ten months and
Was it not you who drove from Simprim-
mains,
And Swinton-quarter, sixty head of cattle?
HOB. What then, if now I lead your
sixty lances [spoil
Upon the English flank, where they'll find
Is worth six hundred beeves?
SWI. Why, thou canst do it, knave. I
would not trust thee [life,
With one poor bullock; yet would risk my
And all my followers, on thine honest
guidance. [creet one
HOB. There is a dingle, and a most dis-
(I've trod each step by star-light), that
sweeps round [secretly
The rearward of this hill, and opens
Upon the archers' flank.—Will not that
Your present turn, Sir Alan? [serve
SWI. Bravely, bravely!
GOR. Mount, sirs, and cry my slogan.
Let all who love the Gordon follow me!
SWI. Ay, let all follow—but in silence
follow; [form—
Scare not the hare that's couchant on her
The cushat from her nest—brush not, if
possible,
The dew-drop from the spray—
Let no one whisper, until I cry, "Havoc!"
Then shout as loud's ye will.—On, on,
brave Hob; [Scotsman!
On, thou false thief, but yet most faithful
[*Exeunt.*

ACT II.—SCENE I.

A rising Ground immediately in front of the Position of the English Main Body. PERCY, CHANDOS, RIBAUMONT, *and other English and Norman Nobles, are grouped on the Stage.*

PER. The Scots still keep the hill—the
sun grows high;
Would that the charge would sound.

CHA. Thou scent'st the slaughter, Percy.—Who comes here?

Enter the ABBOT OF WALTHAMSTOW.

Now, by my life, the holy priest of Walthamstow,
Like to a lamb among a herd of wolves!
See, he's about to bleat.
AB. The King, methinks, delays the onset long. [rat-catcher,
CHA. Your general, Father, like your
Pauses to bait his traps, and set his snares.
AB. The metaphor is decent.
CHA. Reverend sir,
I will uphold it just. Our good King Edward
Will presently come to this battle-field,
And speak to you of the last tilting match,
Or of some feat he did a twenty years since;
But not a word of the day's work before him. [you,
Even as the artist, sir, whose name offends
Sits prosing o'er his can, until the trap fall,
Announcing that the vermin are secured,
And then 'tis up, and on them.
PER. Chandos, you give your tongue too bold a licence.
CHA. Percy, I am a necessary evil.
King Edward would not want me, if he could, [value.
And could not, if he would. I know my
My heavy hand excuses my light tongue.
So men wear weighty swords in their defence,
Although they may offend the tender shin,
When the steel-boot is doff'd.
AB. My Lord of Chandos,
This is but idle speech on brink of battle,
When Christian men should think upon their sins;
For as the tree falls, so the trunk must lie,
Be it for good or evil. Lord, bethink thee,
Thou hast withheld from our most reverend house
The tithes of Everingham and Settleton;
Wilt thou make satisfaction to the Church,
Before her thunders strike thee? I do
In most paternal sort. [warn thee
CHA. I thank you, Father, filially.
Though but a truant son of Holy Church,
I would not choose to undergo her censures,
When Scottish blades are waving at my throat.
I'll make fair composition.
AB. No composition; I'll have all, or none. [I'll take my chance,
CHA. None, then—'tis soonest spoke.
And trust my sinful soul to Heaven's mercy, [thee—
Rather than risk my worldly goods with
My hour may not be come.
AB. Impious—impenitent—
PER. Hush!—the King—the King!

Enter KING EDWARD, *attended by* BALIOL *and others.*

KING (*apart to* CHA.). Hark hither, Chandos!—Have the Yorkshire archers
Yet join'd the vanguard? [archers
CHA. They are marching thither.
K. ED. Bid them make haste, for shame—send a quick rider. [venison,
The loitering knaves! were it to steal my
Their steps were light enough.—How now, Sir Abbot? [with us
Say, is your Reverence come to study
The princely art of war?
AB. I've had a lecture from my Lord of Chandos, [catcher.
In which he term'd your Grace a rat-
K. ED. Chandos, how's this?
CHA. O, I will prove it, sir!—These skipping Scots [and Baliol,
Have changed a dozen times 'twixt Bruce
Quitting each House when it began to totter; [too, as rats,
They're fierce and cunning, treacherous,
And we, as such, will smoke them in their fastnesses.
K. ED. These rats have seen your back, my Lord of Chandos,
And noble Percy's too. [weltering
PER. Ay; but the mass which now lies
On yon hill-side, like a Leviathan
That's stranded on the shallows, then had soul in't,
Order and discipline, and power of action.
Now 'tis a headless corpse, which only shows, [mains in't.
By wild convulsions, that some life re-
K. ED. True, they had once a head; and 'twas a wise,
Although a rebel head.
AB. (*bowing to the* KING). Would he were here! we should find one to match him.
K. ED. There's something in that wish which wakes an echo
Within my bosom. Yet it is as well,
Or better, that The Bruce is in his grave.
We have enough of powerful foes on earth,— [worlds.
No need to summon them from other
PER. Your Grace ne'er met The Bruce?
K. ED. Never himself; but in my earliest field
I did encounter with his famous captains,
Douglas and Randolph. Faith! they press'd me hard. [with a question,
AB. My Liege, if I might urge you
Will the Scots fight to-day?

K. ED. (*sharply*). Go look your breviary.
CHA. (*apart*). The Abbot has it—Edward will not answer
On that nice point. We must observe his humour.—[*Addresses the* KING.]
Your first campaign, my Liege?—That was in Weardale, [night ruffle,
When Douglas gave our camp yon mid-
And turn'd men's beds to biers.
K. ED. Ay, by Saint Edward!—I escaped right nearly.
I was a soldier then for holidays,
And slept not in mine armour: my safe rest
Was startled by the cry of "Douglas! Douglas!"
And by my couch, a grisly chamberlain,
Stood Alan Swinton, with his bloody mace. [chaplain,
It was a churchman saved me—my stout
Heaven quit his spirit! caught a weapon up,
And grappled with the giant.—How now, Louis?

Enter an Officer, who whispers the KING.

K. ED. Say to him,—thus—and thus—[*Whispers.*
AB. That Swinton's dead. A monk of ours reported, [grimace,
Bound homeward from Saint Ninian's pil-
The Lord of Gordon slew him.
PER. Father, and if your house stood on our borders, [ton lives,
You might have cause to know that Swin-
And is on horseback yet.
CHA. He slew the Gordon,
That's all the difference—a very trifle.
AB. Trifling to those who wage a war
Than with the arm of flesh. [more noble
CHA. (*apart*). The Abbot's vex'd, I'll rub the sore for him.—
(*Aloud.*) I have seen priests that used that arm of flesh, [Father,
And used it sturdily.—Most reverend
What say you to the chaplain's deed of arms
In the King's tent at Weardale?
AB. It was most sinful, being against the canon [pons;
Prohibiting all churchmen to bear wea-
And as he fell in that unseemly guise,
Perchance his soul may rue it.
K. ED. (*overhearing the last words*). Who may rue?
And what is to be rued?
CHA. (*apart*). I'll match his Reverence for the tithes of Everingham.
—The Abbot says, my Liege, the deed was sinful, [weapons,
By which your chaplain, wielding secular
Secured your Grace's life and liberty,
And that he suffers for't in purgatory.
K. ED. (*to the* ABBOT). Say'st thou my chaplain is in purgatory? [Liege.
AB. It is the canon speaks it, good my
K. ED. In purgatory! thou shalt pray him out on't,
Or I will make thee wish thyself beside him.
AB. My Lord, perchance his soul is past the aid [place
Of all the Church may do—there is a
From which there's no redemption.
K. ED. And if I thought my faithful chaplain there,
Thou shouldst there join him, priest!—Go, watch, fast, pray,
And let me have such prayers as will storm Heaven—
None of your maim'd and mutter'd hunting masses.
AB. (*apart to* CHA.). For God's sake take him off.
CHA. Wilt thou compound, then,
The tithes of Everingham?
K. ED. I tell thee, if thou bear'st the keys of Heaven, [them
Abbot, thou shalt not turn a bolt with
'Gainst any well-deserving English subject.
AB. (*to* CHA.). We will compound, and grant thee, too, a share [it much,
I' the next indulgence. Thou dost need
And greatly 'twill avail thee.
CHA. Enough—we're friends, and when I will strike in.—— [occasion serves,
[*Looks as if towards the Scottish Army.*
K. ED. Answer, proud Abbot; is my chaplain's soul, [place?
If thou knowest aught on't, in the evil
CHA. My Liege, the Yorkshire men have gain'd the meadow.
I see the pennon green of merry Sherwood.
K. ED. Then give the signal instant! We have lost
But too much time already.
AB. My Liege, your holy chaplain's blessed soul— [this a time
K. ED. To hell with it and thee! Is
To speak of monks and chaplains?
[*Flourish of Trumpets, answered by a distant sound of Bugles.*
See, Chandos, Percy—Ha, Saint George! Saint Edward! [shower,
See it descending now, the fatal hail-
The storm of England's wrath—sure, swift, resistless, [English hearts!
Which no mail-coat can brook.—Brave
How close they shoot together!—as one eye [hand
Had aim'd five thousand shafts—as if one
Had loosed five thousand bow-strings!
PER. The thick volley
Darkens the air, and hides the sun from us.

K. ED. It falls on those shall see the sun no more. [them.
The wingèd, the resistless plague is with
How their vexed host is reeling to and fro, [in him,
Like the chafed whale with fifty lances
They do not see, and cannot shun the wound. [wing,
The storm is viewless as death's sable
Unerring as his scythe.
PER. Horses and riders are going down together.
'Tis almost pity to see nobles fall,
And by a peasant's arrow.
BAL. I could weep them,
Although they are my rebels.
CHA. (*aside to* PER.). His conquerors, he means, who cast him out
From his usurped kingdom.—(*Aloud.*)
'Tis the worst of it,
That knights can claim small honour in the field
Which archers win, unaided by our lances.
K. ED. The battle is not ended.
[*Looks towards the field.*
Not ended?—scarce begun! What horse are these,
Rush from the thicket underneath the hill?
PER. They're Hainaulters, the followers of Queen Isabel.
K. ED. (*hastily*). Hainaulters!—thou art blind—wear Hainaulters
Saint Andrew's silver cross?—or would they charge
Full on our archers, and make havoc of them?—
Bruce is alive again—ho, rescue! rescue!—
Who was't survey'd the ground?
RIBA. Most royal Liege—
K. ED. A rose hath fallen from thy chaplet,† Ribaumont.
RIBA. I'll win it back, or lay my head beside it. [*Exit.*
K. ED. Saint George! Saint Edward! Gentlemen, to horse, [men;
And to the rescue!—Percy, lead the bill-
Chandos, do thou bring up the men-at-arms.— [down
If yonder numerous host should now bear
Bold as their vanguard (*to the Abbot*), thou mayst pray for us,
We may need good men's prayers.—To the rescue,
Lords, to the rescue! ha, Saint George! Saint Edward! [*Exeunt.*

† The well-known expression by which Robert Bruce censured the negligence of Randolph, for permitting an English body of cavalry to pass his flank on the day preceding the battle of Bannockburn.

SCENE II.

A part of the Field of Battle betwixt the two Main Armies. Tumults behind the scenes; alarums, and cries of "Gordon! a Gordon!" "Swinton!" &c.

Enter, as victorious over the English vanguard, VIPONT, REYNALD, *and others.*

VIP. 'Tis sweet to hear these war-cries sound together,—
Gordon and Swinton. [strange withal.
REY. 'Tis passing pleasant, yet 'tis
Faith, when at first I heard the Gordon's slogan [down
Sounded so near me, I had nigh struck
The knave who cried it.
Enter SWINTON *and* GORDON.
SWI. Pitch down my pennon in yon holly bush. — [them wave,
GOR. Mine in the thorn beside it; let
As fought this morn their masters, side by side. [their ranks
SWI. Let the men rally, and restore
Here in this vantage-ground—disorder'd chase [our part,
Leads to disorder'd flight; we have done
And if we're succour'd now, Plantagenet
Must turn his bridle southward.—
Reynald, spur to the Regent with the basnet [guard;
Of stout De Grey, the leader of their van-
Say, that in battle-front the Gordon slew him, [cour.
And by that token bid him send us suc-
GOR. And tell him that when Selby's headlong charge [smote him.
Had well-nigh borne me down, Sir Alan
I cannot send his helmet, never nutshell
Went to so many shivers.—Harkye, grooms! [*To those behind the scenes.*
Why do you let my noble steed stand
After so hot a course? [stiffening
SWI. Ay, breathe your horses, they'll have work anon, [on us,
For Edward's men-at-arms will soon be
The flower of England, Gascony, and Flanders; [bravely.—
But with swift succour we will bide them
De Vipont, thou look'st sad. [sword
VIP. It is because I hold a Templar's
Wet to the crossed hilt with Christian blood. [what can gild
SWI. The blood of English archers—
A Scottish blade more bravely?
VIP. Even therefore grieve I for those gallant yeomen,
England's peculiar and appropriate sons,
Known in no other land. Each boasts his hearth [barony,
And field as free as the best lord his

Owing subjection to no human vassalage,
Save to their King and law. Hence are they resolute,
Leading the van on every day of battle,
As men who know the blessings they defend. [peace,
Hence are they frank and generous in
As men who have their portion in its plenty. [happiness
No other kingdom shows such worth and
Veil'd in such low estate—therefore I mourn them. [Scots,

SWI. I'll keep my sorrow for our native
Who, spite of hardship, poverty, oppression, [banner,
Still follow to the field their Chieftain's
And die in the defence on't.

GOR. And if I live and see my halls again, [fight for.
They shall have portion in the good they
Each hardy follower shall have his field,
His household hearth and sod-built home, as free [happy!—
As ever Southron had. They shall be
And my Elizabeth shall smile to see it!—
I have betray'd myself.

SWI. Do not believe it.—
Vipont, do thou look out from yonder height,
And see what motion in the Scottish host,
And in King Edward's.—[*Exit* VIPONT.
Now will I counsel thee;
The Templar's ear is for no tale of love,
Being wedded to his Order. But I tell thee, [lady-love
The brave young knight that hath no
Is like a lamp unlighted; his brave deeds,
And its rich painting, do seem then most glorious,
When the pure ray gleams through them.—
Hath thy Elizabeth no other name?

GOR. Must I then speak of her to you, Sir Alan? [strength,
The thought of thee, and of thy matchless
Hath conjured phantoms up amongst her dreams.
The name of Swinton hath been spell sufficient
To chase the rich blood from her lovely cheek,
And wouldst thou now know hers?

SWI. I would, nay must.
Thy father in the paths of chivalry,
Should know the load-star thou dost rule thy course by.

GOR. Nay, then, her name is—hark—
[*Whispers.*

SWI. I know it well, that ancient northern house. [and honour

GOR. O, thou shalt see its fairest grace
In my Elizabeth. And if music touch thee—— [tuned me.

SWI. It did, before disasters had un-

GOR. O, her notes [oblivion,
Shall hush each sad remembrance to
Or melt them to such gentleness of feeling,
That grief shall have its sweetness. Who, but she, [land?
Knows the wild harpings of our native
Whether they lull the shepherd on his hill,
Or wake the knight to battle; rouse to merriment, [mood.
Or soothe to sadness; she can touch each
Princes and statesmen, chiefs renowned in arms, [shall the first
And grey-haired bards, contend which
And choicest homage render to the enchantress.

SWI. You speak her talent bravely.

GOR. Though you smile,
I do not speak it half. Her gift creative,
New measures adds to every air she wakes;
Varying and gracing it with liquid sweetness,
Like the wild modulation of the lark;
Now leaving, now returning to the strain!
To listen to her, is to seem to wander
In some enchanted labyrinth of romance,
Whence nothing but the lovely fairy's will,
Who wove the spell, can extricate the wanderer.
Methinks I hear her now!—

SWI. Bless'd privilege
Of youth! There's scarce three minutes to decide [defeat,
'Twixt death and life, 'twixt triumph and
Yet all his thoughts are in his lady's bower,
List'ning her harping! [*Enter* VIPONT.
Where are thine, De Vipont?

VIP. On death—on judgment—on eternity!
For time is over with us.

SWI. There moves not, then, one pennon to our aid,
Of all that flutter yonder!

VIP. From the main English host came rushing forward [Standard.
Pennons enow—ay, and their Royal
But ours stand rooted, as for crows to roost on.

SWI. (*to himself*). I'll rescue him at least.—Young Lord of Gordon,
Spur to the Regent—show the instant need—— [not.

GOR. I penetrate thy purpose; but I go

SWI. Not at my bidding? I, thy sire in chivalry— [thee!
Thy leader in the battle?—I command

GOR. No, thou wilt not command me seek my safety—

For such is thy kind meaning—at the expense [for Scotland.
Of the last hope which Heaven reserves
While I abide, no follower of mine
Will turn his rein for life; but were I gone,
What power can stay them? and, our band dispersed,
What sword shall for an instant stem yon host,
And save the latest chance for victory?

VIP. The noble youth speaks truth; and were he gone,
There will not twenty spears be left with us.

GOR. No, bravely as we have begun the field,
So let us fight it out. The Regent's eyes,
More certain than a thousand messages,
Shall see us stand, the barrier of his host
Against yon bursting storm. If not for honour,
If not for warlike rule, for shame at least
He must bear down to aid us.

SWI. Must it be so?
And am I forced to yield the sad consent,
Devoting thy young life? O, Gordon, Gordon!
I do it as the patriarch doom'd his issue;
I at my country's, he at Heaven's command;
But I seek vainly some atoning sacrifice,
Rather than such a victim!—(*Trumpets.*)
Hark, they come!
That music sounds not like thy lady's lute.

GOR. Yet shall my lady's name mix with it gaily.—
Mount, vassals, couch your lances, and cry, "Gordon!
Gordon for Scotland and Elizabeth!"
[*Exeunt. Loud Alarums.*

SCENE III.

Another part of the Field of Battle, adjacent to the former Scene.

Alarums. Enter SWINTON, *followed by* HOB HATTELY.

SWI. Stand to it yet! The man who flies to-day,
May bastards warm them at his household hearth!

HOB. That ne'er shall be my curse. My Magdalen
Is trusty as my broadsword.

SWI. Ha, thou knave,
Art thou dismounted too?

HOB. I know, Sir Alan,
You want no homeward guide; so threw my reins
Upon my palfrey's neck, and let him loose.
Within an hour he stands before my gate;
And Magdalen will need no other token
To bid the Melrose Monks say masses for me.

SWI. Thou art resolved to cheat the halter, then?

HOB. It is my purpose,
Having lived a thief, to die a brave man's death;
And never had I a more glorious chance for't.

SWI. Here lies the way to it, knave.—Make in, make in,
And aid young Gordon!

[*Exeunt. Loud and long Alarums. After which the back Scene rises, and discovers* SWINTON *on the ground,* GORDON *supporting him; both much wounded.*

SWI. All are cut down—the reapers have pass'd o'er us,
And hie to distant harvest.—My toil's over;
There lies my sickle. (*Dropping his sword.*) Hand of mine again
Shall never, never wield it!

GOR. O valiant leader, is thy light extinguished!
That only beacon-flame which promised safety
In this day's deadly wrack!

SWI. My lamp hath long been dim!
But thine, young Gordon,
Just kindled, to be quenched so suddenly,
Ere Scotland saw its splendour!—

GOR. Five thousand horse hung idly on yon hill,
Saw us o'erpower'd, and no one stirr'd to aid us!

SWI. It was the Regent's envy.—Out!—alas!
Why blame I him!—It was our civil discord,
Our selfish vanity, our jealous hatred,
Which framed this day of dole for our poor country.—
Had thy brave father held yon leading staff,
As well his rank and valour might have claim'd it,
We had not fall'n unaided.—How, O how
Is he to answer it, whose deed prevented——

GOR. Alas! alas! the author of the death-feud,
He has his reckoning too! for had your sons
And num'rous vassals lived, we had lack'd no aid,

SWI. May God assoil the dead, and him who follows!

We've drank the poison'd beverage which we brew'd:
Have sown the wind, and reap'd the tenfold whirlwind!—
But thou, brave youth, whose nobleness of heart
Pour'd oil upon the wounds our hate inflicted;
Thou, who hast done no wrong, need'st no forgiveness,—
Why should'st thou share our punishment!

GOR. All need forgiveness—(*distant alarums.*)——Hark, in yonder shout,
Did the main battles counter!

SWI. Look on the field, brave Gordon, if thou canst,
And tell me how the day goes.—But I guess,
Too surely do I guess——

GOR. All's lost! all's lost!—Of the main Scottish host,
Some wildly fly, and some rush wildly forward;
And some there are who seem to turn their spears
Against their countrymen.

SWI. Rashness, and cowardice, and secret treason,
Combine to ruin us; and our hot valour,
Devoid of discipline, is madmen's strength,
More fatal unto friends than enemies!
I'm glad that these dim eyes shall see no more on't.—
Let thy hands close them, Gordon—I will dream
My fair-hair'd William renders me that office! [*Dies.*

GOR. And, Swinton, I will think I do that duty
To my dead father.

Enter DE VIPONT.

VIP. Fly, fly, brave youth!—A handful of thy followers,
The scatter'd gleaning of this desperate day,
Still hover yonder to essay thy rescue—
O linger not!—I 'll be your guide to them.

GOR. Look there, and bid me fly!—
The oak has fall'n;
And the young ivy bush, which learn'd to climb
By its support, must needs partake its fall.

VIP. Swinton? Alas! the best, the bravest, strongest,
And sagest of our Scottish chivalry!
Forgive one moment, if to save the living,
My tongue should wrong the dead.—
Gordon, bethink thee,
Thou dost but stay to perish with the corpse
Of him who slew thy father.

GOR. Ay, but he was my sire in chivalry!
He taught my youth to soar above the promptings
Of mean and selfish vengeance; gave my youth
A name that shall not die even on this death-spot,
Records shall tell this field had not been lost,
Had all men fought like Swinton and like Gordon. [*Trumpets.*
Save thee, De Vipont.—Hark! the Southron trumpets.

VIP. Nay, without thee I stir not.

Enter EDWARD, CHANDOS, PERCY, BALIOL, *&c.*

GOR. Ay, they come on—the Tyrant and the Traitor,
Workman and tool, Plantagenet and Baliol.—
O for a moment's strength in this poor arm,
To do one glorious deed!
[*He rushes on the English, but is made prisoner with* VIPONT.

K. ED. Disarm them—harm them not; though it was they
Made havoc on the archers of our vanguard,
They and that bulky champion. Where is he?

CHA. Here lies the giant! Say his name, young Knight!

GOR. Let it suffice, he was a man this morning.

CHA. I question'd thee in sport. I do not need
Thy information, youth. Who that has fought
Through all these Scottish wars, but knows his crest?
The sable boar chain'd to the leafy oak,
And that huge mace still seen where war was wildest!

K. ED. 'Tis Alan Swinton!
Grim Chamberlain, who in my tent at Weardale,
Stood by my startled couch with torch and mace,
When the Black Douglas' war-cry waked my camp.

GOR. (*sinking down*). If thus thou know'st him,
Thou wilt respect his corpse.

K. ED. As belted Knight and crowned King, I will.

GOR. And let mine
Sleep at his side, in token that our death
Ended the feud of Swinton and of Gordon.
K. ED. It is the Gordon! Is there aught beside
Edward can do to honour bravery,
Even in an enemy?
GOR. Nothing but this;
Let not base Baliol, with his touch or look,
Profane my corpse or Swinton's. I 've some breath still,
Enough to say—Scotland—Elizabeth!
[*Dies.*
CHA. Baliol, I would not brook such dying looks,
To buy the crown you aim at.
K. ED. (*to* VIP.) Vipont, thy crossed shield shows ill in warfare
Against a Christian King.
VIP. That Christian King is warring upon Scotland.
I was a Scotsman ere I was a Templar,
Sworn to my country ere I knew my Order.
K. ED. I will but know thee as a Christian champion,
And set thee free unransom'd.

Enter ABBOT OF WALTHAMSTOW.

AB. Heaven grant your Majesty
Many such glorious days as this has been!
K. ED. It is a day of much and high advantage;
Glorious it might have been, had all our foes
Fought like these two brave champions.
—Strike the drums,
Sound trumpets, and pursue the fugitives,
Till the Tweed's eddies whelm them.
Berwick's render'd—
These wars, I trust, will soon find lasting close.

NOTES TO THE LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL.

* P. 16.—In the reign of James I., Sir William Scott of Buccleuch, chief of the clan bearing that name, exchanged, with Sir Thomas Inglis of Manor, the estate of Murdiestone, in Lanarkshire, for one-half of the barony of Branksome, or Brankholm, lying upon the Teviot, about three miles above Hawick. He was probably induced to this transaction from the vicinity of Branksome to the extensive domain which he possessed in Ettrick Forest, and in Teviotdale. In the former district he held by occupancy the estate of Buccleuch, and much of the forest land on the river Ettrick. In Teviotdale, he enjoyed the barony of Eckford, by a grant from Robert II. to his ancestor, Walter Scott of Kirkurd, for the apprehending of Gilbert Ridderford, confirmed by Robert III. 3rd May, 1424. Tradition imputes the exchange betwixt Scott and Inglis to a conversation, in which the latter—a man, it would appear, of a mild and forbearing nature—complained much of the injuries to which he was exposed from the English Borderers, who frequently plundered his lands of Branksome. Sir William Scott instantly offered him the estate of Murdiestone, in exchange for that which was subject to such egregious inconvenience. When the bargain was completed, he dryly remarked, that the cattle in Cumberland were as good as those of Teviotdale; and proceeded to commence a system of reprisals upon the English, which was regularly pursued by his successors. In the next reign, James II. granted to Sir Walter Scott of Branksome, and to Sir David, his son, the remaining half of the barony of Branksome, to be held in blanche for the payment of a red rose. The cause assigned for the grant is, their brave and faithful exertions in favour of the King against the house of Douglas, with whom James had been recently tugging for the throne of Scotland. This charter is dated the 2nd February, 1443; and, in the same month, part of the barony of Langholm, and many lands in Lanarkshire, were conferred upon Sir Walter and his son by the same monarch.

* P. 16.—The ancient barons of Buccleuch, both from feudal splendour and from their frontier situation, retained in their household at Branksome a number of gentlemen of their own name, who held lands from their chief, for the military service of watching and warding his castle.

* P. 16.—"Of a truth," says Froissart, "the Scottish cannot boast great skill with the bow, but rather bear axes, with which, in time of need, they give heavy strokes." The Jedwood axe was a sort of partisan, used by horsemen, as appears from the arms of Jedburgh, which bear a cavalier mounted, and armed with this weapon. It is also called a Jedwood or Jeddart staff.

* P. 16.—Branksome Castle was continually exposed to the attacks of the English, both from its situation and the restless military disposition of its inhabitants, who were seldom on good terms with their neighbours.

* P. 16.—Sir Walter Scott of Buccleuch succeeded to his grandfather, Sir David, in 1492. He was a brave and powerful baron, and Warden of the West Marches of Scotland. His death was the consequence of a feud betwixt the Scotts and Kerrs.

* P. 16.—Among other expedients resorted to for stanching the feud betwixt the Scotts and the Kerrs, was a bond executed in 1529, between the heads of each clan, binding themselves to perform reciprocally the four principal pilgrimages of Scotland, for the benefit of the souls of those of the opposite name who had fallen in the quarrel. But either this indenture never took effect, or else the feud was renewed shortly afterwards. The family of Ker, Kerr, or Carr was very powerful on the Border.

* P. 17.—Padua was long supposed by the Scottish peasants to be the principal school of necromancy.

* P. 17.—The shadow of a necromancer is independent of the sun. Glycas informs us that Simon Magus caused his shadow to go before him, making people believe it was an attendant spirit.

* P. 18.—The kings and heroes of Scotland, as well as the Border-riders, were sometimes obliged to study how to evade the pursuit of blood-hounds. Barbour informs us that Robert Bruce was repeatedly tracked by sleuth-dogs. On one occasion, he escaped by wading a bow-shot down a brook, and ascending into a tree by a branch which overhung the water; thus, leaving no trace on land of his footsteps, he baffled the scent. A sure way of stopping the dog was to spill blood upon the track, which destroyed the discriminating fineness of his scent. A captive was sometimes sacrificed on such occasions. Henry the Minstrel tells a romantic story of Wallace, founded on this circumstance:—The hero's little band had been joined by an Irishman, named Fawdoun, or Fadzean, a dark, savage, and suspicious character. After a sharp skirmish at Black-Erne Side, Wallace was forced to retreat with only sixteen followers, the English pursuing with a Border blood-hound. In the retreat, Fawdoun,

tired, or affecting to be so, would go no farther, and Wallace, having in vain argued with him, in hasty anger, struck off his head, and continued the retreat. When the English came up, their hound stayed upon the dead body:—

"The sleuth stopped at Fawdon, still she stood,
Nor farther would, fra time she fund the blood."

* P. 19.—The ancient and beautiful monastery of Melrose was founded by King David I. Its ruins afford the finest specimen of Gothic architecture and Gothic sculpture which Scotland can boast. The stone of which it is built, though it has resisted the weather for so many ages, retains perfect sharpness, so that even the most minute ornaments seem as entire as when newly wrought.

* P. 19.—David I. of Scotland purchased the reputation of sanctity, by founding, and liberally endowing, not only the monastery of Melrose, but those of Kelso, Jedburgh, and many others; which led to the well-known observation of his successor, that he was a *sore saint for the crown*.

* P. 20.—The desperate battle of Otterburne was fought 15th August, 1388, betwixt Henry Percy, called Hotspur, and James, Earl of Douglas. Both these renowned champions, rivals in military fame, were at the head of a chosen body of troops. The issue of the conflict is well known: Percy was made prisoner, and the Scots won the day, dearly purchased by the death of their gallant general, the Earl of Douglas, who was slain in the action. He was buried at Melrose beneath the high altar.

* P. 20.—William Douglas, the Knight of Liddesdale, flourished during the reign of David II., and was so distinguished by his valour, that he was called the Flower of Chivalry. But he tarnished his renown by the murder of Sir Alexander Ramsay of Dalhousie, originally his friend and brother in arms. The King had conferred upon Ramsay the sheriffdom of Teviotdale, to which Douglas pretended some claim. In revenge of this preference, the Knight of Liddesdale came down upon Ramsay, while he was administering justice at Hawick, seized and carried him off to his remote and inaccessible castle of Hermitage, where he threw his unfortunate prisoner, horse and man, into a dungeon, leaving him to perish of hunger. So weak was the royal authority, that David, although highly incensed at this atrocious murder, found himself obliged to appoint the Knight of Liddesdale successor to his victim, as Sheriff of Teviotdale. But he was soon after slain, while hunting in Ettrick Forest, by his own godson and chieftain, William, Earl of Douglas, in revenge, according to some authors, of Ramsay's murder; although a popular tradition, preserved in a ballad quoted by Godscroft, some parts of which are still preserved, ascribes the resentment of the Earl to jealousy.

* P. 21.—Sir Michael Scott of Balwearie flourished during the 13th century, and was one of the ambassadors sent to bring the maid of Norway to Scotland upon the death of Alexander III. By a poetical anachronism, he is here placed in a later era. He was a man of much learning, chiefly acquired in foreign countries. He wrote a commentary upon Aristotle, printed at Venice in 1496; and several treatises upon natural philosophy, from which he appears to have been addicted to the abstruse studies of judicial astrology, alchymy, physiognomy, and chiromancy. Hence he passed among his contemporaries for a skilful magician. Dempster informs us that he remembers to have heard in his youth that the magic books of Michael Scott were still in existence, but could not be opened without danger, on account of the malignant fiends who were thereby invoked. Tradition varies concerning the place of his burial; some contending for Home Coltrame, in Cumberland; others for Melrose Abbey. But all agree that his books of magic were interred in his grave, or preserved in the convent where he died.

* P. 21.—Michael Scott was, once upon a time, much embarrassed by a spirit, for whom he was under the necessity of finding constant employment. He commanded him to build a *cauld*, or dam-head, across the Tweed at Kelso; it was accomplished in one night, and still does honour to the infernal architect. Michael next ordered that Eildon hill, which was then a uniform cone, should be divided into three. Another night was sufficient to part its summit into the three picturesque peaks which it now bears. At length the enchanter conquered this indefatigable demon, by employing him in the hopeless and endless task of making ropes out of sea-sand.

* P. 23.—The idea of Lord Cranstoun's Goblin Page is taken from a being called Gilpin Horner, who appeared, and made some stay, at a farm-house among the Border mountains.

* P. 25.—*Glamour*, in the legends of Scottish superstition, means the magic power of imposing on the eyesight of the spectators, so that the appearance of an object shall be totally different from the reality. To such a charm the ballad of Johnny Fa' imputes the fascination of the lovely Countess, who eloped with that gipsy leader:—

"Sae soon as they saw her weel-far'd face,
They cast the *glamour* o'er her."

* P. 25.—It is a firm article of popular faith, that no enchantment can subsist in a living stream. Nay, if you can interpose a brook betwixt you and witches, spectres, or even fiends, you are in perfect safety. Burns's inimitable *Tam o' Shanter* turns entirely upon such a circumstance.

* P. 26.—To wound an antagonist in the thigh or leg was reckoned contrary to the law of arms. In a tilt betwixt Gawain Michael, an English squire, and Joachim Cathore, a Frenchman, "they met at the speare poyntes rudely; the French squyer justed right pleasantly; the Englishman ran too lowe, for he strak the Frenchman depe into the thigh. Wherewith the Erle of Buckingham was right sore displeased, and so were all the other lords, and sayde how it was shamefully done."—Froissart, vol. i., chap. 366.

* P. 27.—*Bale*, beacon-fagot. The Border beacons, from their number and position, formed a sort of telegraphic communication with Edin-

burgh. The Act of Parliament 1455, c. 48, directs that one bale or fagot shall be warning of the approach of the English in any manner; two bales, that they are *coming indeed;* four bales, blazing beside each other, that the enemy are in great force.

* P. 27.—The cairns, or piles of loose stones, which crown the summit of most of our Scottish hills, and are found in other remarkable situations, seem usually, though not universally, to have been sepulchral monuments. Six flat stones are commonly found in the centre, forming a cavity of greater or smaller dimensions, in which an urn is often placed. The author is possessed of one, discovered beneath an immense cairn at Roughlee, in Liddesdale. It is of the most barbarous construction; the middle of the substance alone having been subjected to the fire, over which, when hardened, the artist had laid an inner and outer coat of unbaked clay, etched with some very rude ornaments, his skill apparently being inadequate to baking the vase when completely finished. The contents were bones and ashes, and a quantity of beads made of coal. This seems to have been a barbarous imitation of the Roman fashion of sepulture.

* P. 28.—The Viscount of Dundee, slain in the battle of Killiecrankie.

* P. 28.—The morasses were the usual refuge of the Border herdsmen on the approach of an English army.—*Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, vol. i., p. 393. Caves, hewed in the most dangerous and inaccessible places, also afforded an occasional retreat. Such caverns may be seen in the precipitous banks of the Teviot at Sunlaws, upon the Ale at Ancram, upon the Jed at Hundalee, and in many other places upon the Border. The banks of the Eske, at Gorton and Hawthornden, are holowed into similar recesses.

* P. 28.—This person was, in my younger days, the theme of many a fireside tale. He was a retainer of the Buccleuch family, and held for his Border service a small tower on the frontiers of Liddesdale. Watt was by profession a *sutor*, but by inclination and practice an archer and warrior. Upon one occasion, the captain of Bewcastle, military governor of that wild district of Cumberland, is said to have made an incursion into Scotland, in which he was defeated, and forced to fly. Watt Tinlinn pursued him closely through a dangerous morass; the captain, however, gained the firm ground; and, seeing Tinlinn dismounted and floundering in the bog, used these words of insult:—Sutor Watt, ye cannot sew your boots; the heels *risp*, and the seams *rive*."†—"If I cannot sew," retorted Tinlinn, discharging a shaft, which nailed the captain's thigh to his saddle,—"if I cannot sew, I can *yerk*."‡

* P. 28.—As the Borderers were indifferent about the furniture of their habitations, so much exposed to be burned and plundered, they were proportionally anxious to display splendour in decorating and ornamenting their females.—See LESLEY *de Moribus Limitaneorum.*

† *Risp*, creak—*Rive*, tear.

‡ *Yerk*, to twitch, as shoemakers do, in securing the stitches of their work.

* P. 29.—Lord William Howard, third son of Thomas, Duke of Norfolk, succeeded to Naworth Castle, and a large domain annexed to it, in right of his wife Elizabeth, sister of George, Lord Dacre, who died without heirs male, in the 11th of Queen Elizabeth. By a poetical anachronism, he is introduced into the romance a few years earlier than he actually flourished. He was warden of the Western Marches: and, from the rigour with which he repressed the Border excesses, the name of Belted Will Howard is still famous in our traditions.

* P. 29.—The well-known name of Dacre is derived from the exploits of one of their ancestors at the siege of Acre, or Ptolemais, under Richard Cœur de Lion.

* P. 29.—In the wars with Scotland, Henry VIII. and his successors employed numerous bands of mercenary troops. At the battle of Pinkie, there were in the English army six hundred hackbutters on foot, and two hundred on horseback, composed chiefly of foreigners.

* P. 30.—Bellenden is situated near the head of Borthwick water, and being in the centre of the possessions of the Scotts, was frequently used as their place of rendezvous and gathering word.

* P. 32.—Several species of offences, peculiar to the Border, constituted what was called march-treason. Among others, was the crime of riding, or causing to ride, against the opposite country during the time of truce.

* P. 32.—The dignity of knighthood, according to the original institution, had this peculiarity, that it did not flow from the monarch, but could be conferred by one who himself possessed it, upon any squire who, after due probation, was found to merit the honour of chivalry. Latterly, this power was confined to generals, who were wont to create knights bannerets after or before an engagement.

* P. 32.—The battle of Ancram Moor, or Penielheuch, was fought A.D. 1545. The English, commanded by Sir Ralph Evers and Sir Brian Latoun, were totally routed, and both their leaders slain in the action. The Scottish army was commanded by Archibald Douglas, Earl of Angus, assisted by the Laird of Buccleuch and Norman Leslie.

* P. 33.—This was the cognizance of the noble house of Howard in all its branches. The crest, or bearing, of a warrior, was often used as a *nomme de guerre*.

* P. 34.—The chief of this potent race of heroes, about the date of the poem, was Archibald Douglas, seventh Earl of Angus, a man of great courage and activity. The Bloody Heart was the well-known cognizance of the House of Douglas, assumed from the time of good Lord James, to whose care Robert Bruce committed his heart, to be carried to the Holy Land.

* P. 34.—Sir David Home of Wedderburn, slain in the fatal battle of Flodden, left seven sons, who were called the Seven Spears of Wedderburne.

* P. 34.—At the battle of Beaugé, in France, Thomas, Duke of Clarence, brother to Henry V., was unhorsed by Sir John Swinton of

Swinton, who distinguished him by a coronet set with precious stones, which he wore around his helmet. The family of Swinton is one of the most ancient in Scotland, and produced many celebrated warriors.

* P. 35.—The Earls of Home, as descendants of the Dunbars, ancient Earls of March, carried a lion rampant, argent; but, as a difference, changed the colour of the shield from gules to vert, in allusion to Greenlaw, their ancient possession. The slogan, or war-cry, of this powerful family was, "A Home! a Home!" The Hepburns, a powerful family in East Lothian, were usually in close alliance with the Homes. The chief of this clan was Hepburn, Lord of Hailes; a family which terminated in the too famous Earl of Bothwell.

* P. 35.—Notwithstanding the constant wars upon the Borders, and the occasional cruelties which marked the mutual inroads, the inhabitants on either side do not appear to have regarded each other with that violent and personal animosity which might have been expected. On the contrary, like the outposts of hostile armies, they often carried on something resembling friendly intercourse, even in the middle of hostilities; and it is evident, from various ordinances against trade and intermarriages between English and Scottish Borderers, that the governments of both countries were jealous of their cherishing too intimate a connection.

* P. 39.—The pursuit of Border marauders was followed by the injured party and his friends with blood-hounds and bugle-horn, and was called the *hot-trod*. He was entitled, if his dog could trace the scent, to follow the invaders into the opposite kingdom—a privilege which often occasioned bloodshed. The breed of the blood-hound was kept up by the Buccleuch family on their Border estates till within the 18th century.

* P. 40.—Popular belief, though contrary to the doctrines of the Church, made a favourable distinction betwixt magicians and necromancers or wizards; the former were supposed to command the evil spirits, and the latter to serve, or at least to be in league and compact with, those enemies of mankind. The arts of subjecting the demons were manifold; sometimes the fiends were actually swindled by the magicians.

* P. 40.—A merlin, or sparrow-hawk, was actually carried by ladies of rank, as a falcon was, in time of peace, the constant attendant of a knight or baron. Godscroft relates, that when Mary of Lorraine was regent, she pressed the Earl of Angus to admit a royal garrison into his Castle of Tantallon. To this he returned no direct answer; but, as if apostrophising a goss-hawk, which sat on his wrist, and which he was feeding during the Queen's speech, he exclaimed, "The devil's in this greedy glede, she will never be full."—HUME'S *History of the House of Douglas*, 1743, vol. ii., p. 131. Barclay complains of the common and indecent practice of bringing hawks and hounds into churches.

* P. 40.—The peacock, it is well known, was considered, during the times of chivalry, not merely as an exquisite delicacy, but as a dish of peculiar solemnity. After being roasted, it was again decorated with its plumage, and a sponge, dipped in lighted spirits of wine, was placed in its bill. When it was introduced on days of grand festival, it was the signal for the adventurous knights to take upon them vows to do some deed of chivalry, "before the peacock and the ladies." The boar's head was also a usual dish of feudal splendour. In Scotland it was sometimes surrounded with little banners displaying the colours and achievements of the baron at whose board it was served.—PINKERTON'S *History*, vol. i., p. 432.

* P. 40.—The Rutherfords of Hunthill were an ancient race of Border Lairds, whose names occur in history, sometimes as defending the frontier against the English, sometimes as disturbing the peace of their own country. Dickon Draw-the-Sword was son to the ancient warrior, called in tradition the Cock of Hunthill, remarkable for leading into battle nine sons, gallant warriors, all sons of the aged champion.

* P. 40.—To bite the thumb, or the glove, seems not to have been considered, upon the Border, as a gesture of contempt, though so used by Shakspere, but as a pledge of mortal revenge. It is yet remembered, that a young gentleman of Teviotdale, on the morning after a hard drinking-bout, observed that he had bitten his glove. He instantly demanded of his companion with whom he had quarrelled? And, learning that he had had words with one of the party, insisted on instant satisfaction, asserting that though he remembered nothing of the dispute, yet he was sure he never would have bit his glove unless he had received some unpardonable insult. He fell in the duel, which was fought near Selkirk, in 1721.

* P. 41.—"John Grahame, second son of *Malice*, Earl of *Monteith*, commonly sirnamed *John with the Bright Sword*, upon some displeasure risen against him at court, retired with many of his clan and kindred into the English Borders, in the reign of King Henry the Fourth, where they seated themselves; and many of their posterity have continued ever since. Mr. Sandford, speaking of them, says (which indeed was applicable to most of the Borderers on both sides), 'They were all stark moss-troopers, and arrant thieves: both to England and Scotland outlawed; yet sometimes connived at, because they gave intelligence forth of Scotland, and would raise 400 horse at any time upon a raid of the English into Scotland. A saying is recorded of a mother to her son (which is now become proverbial), *Ride, Rowley, hough's i' the pot*: that is, the last piece of beef was in the pot, and therefore it was high time for him to go and fetch more.'"—*Introduction to the History of Cumberland.*

* P. 41.—The gallant and unfortunate Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, was unquestionably the most accomplished cavalier of his time; and his sonnets display beauties which would do honour to a more polished age. He was beheaded on Tower-hill in 1546; a victim to the mean jealousy of Henry VIII., who could not bear so brilliant a character near his throne.

The song of the supposed bard is founded on an incident said to have happened to the Earl

in his travels. Cornelius Agrippa, the celebrated alchemist, showed him, in a looking-glass, the lovely Geraldine to whose service he had devoted his pen and his sword. The vision represented her as indisposed, and reclining upon a couch, reading her lover's verses by the light of a waxen taper.

* P. 42.—The *jormungandr*, or Snake of the Ocean, whose folds surround the earth, is one of the wildest fictions of the Edda. It was very nearly caught by the god Thor, who went to fish for it with a hook baited with a bull's head. In the battle betwixt the evil demons and the divinities of Odin, which is to precede the *Ragnarocker*, or Twilight of the Gods, this Snake is to act a conspicuous part.

* P. 42.—These were the *Valcyriur*, or Selectors of the Slain, despatched by Odin from Valhalla, to choose those who were to die, and to distribute the contest. They are all well known to the English reader, as Gray's Fatal Sisters.

* P. 42.—The northern warriors were usually entombed with their arms, and their other treasures. Thus, Angantyr, before commencing the duel in which he was slain, stipulated, that if he fell, his sword Tyrfing should be buried with him. His daughter, Hervor, afterwards took it from his tomb. The dialogue which passed betwixt her and Angantyr's spirit on this occasion has been often translated. The whole history may be found in the Hervarar-Saga. Indeed, the ghosts of the northern warriors were not wont tamely to suffer their tombs to be plundered; and hence the mortal heroes had an additional temptation to attempt such adventures; for they held nothing more worthy of their valour than to encounter supernatural beings.—*Bartholinus De causis contemptæ a Danis mortis*, lib. 1 cap. 2, 9, 10, 13.

* P. 43.—This was a favourite saint of the house of Douglas, and of the Earl of Angus in particular, as we learn from the following passage:—The Queen-Regent had proposed to raise a rival noble to the ducal dignity; and discoursing of her purpose with Angus, he answered, 'Why not, madam? we are happy that have such a princess, that can know and will acknowledge men's services, and is willing to recompense it; but, by the might of God' (this was his oath when he was serious and in anger; at other times, it was by St. Bryde of Douglas), if he be a Duke, I will be a Drake?' —So she desisted from prosecuting of that purpose.—*Godscroft*, vol. ii., p. 131.

NOTES TO MARMION.

* P. 50.—The romance of the *Morte Arthur* contains a sort of abridgment of the most celebrated adventures of the Round Table; and, being written in comparatively modern language, gives the general reader an excellent idea of what romances of chivalry actually were. It has also the merit of being written in pure old English; and many of the wild adventures which it contains are told with a simplicity bordering upon the sublime. Several of these are referred to in the text; and I would have illustrated them by more full extracts, but as this curious work is about to be republished, I confine myself to the tale of the Chapel Perilous, and of the quest of Sir Launcelot after the Sangreal.

"Right so Sir Launcelot departed, and when he came to the Chapell Perilous, he alighted downe, and tied his horse to a little gate. And as soon as he was within the churchyard, he saw, on the front of the chapell, many faire rich shields turned upside downe; and many of the shields Sir Launcelot had seene knights have before; with that he saw stand by him thirtie great knights, more, by a yard, than any man that ever he had seene, and all those grinned and gnashed at Sir Launcelot; and when he saw their countenance, hee dread them sore, and so put his shield afore him, and tooke his sword in his hand, ready to doe battaile; and they were all armed in black harneis, ready, with their shields and swords drawn. And when Sir Launcelot would have gone through them, they scattered on every side of him, and him the way; and therewith he waxed all bold, and entered into the chapell, and then hee saw no light but a dimme lampe burning, and then was he ware of a corps covered with a cloath of silke; then Sir Launcelot stooped downe, and cut a piece of that cloth away, and then it fared under him as the earth had quaked a little, whereof he was afeard, and then hee saw a faire sword lye by the dead knight, and that he gat in his hand, and hied him out of the chappell. As soon as he was in the chappell-yerd, all the knights spoke to him with a grimly voice, and said, 'Knight, Sir Launcelot, lay that sword from thee, or else thou shalt die.'—'Whether I live or die,' said Sir Launcelot, 'with no great words get yee it againe, therefore fight for it an yee list.' Therewith he passed through them; and, beyond the chappell-yerd, there met him a fair damosell, and said, 'Sir Launcelot, leave that sword behind thee, or thou wilt die for it.'—'I will not leave it,' said Sir Launcelot, 'for no threats.' —'No?' said she; 'and ye did leave that sword, Queen Guenever should ye never see.' —'Then were I a fool and I would leave this sword,' said Sir Launcelot. —'Now, gentle knight,' said the damosell, 'I require thee to kiss me once.'—'Nay,' said Sir Launcelot, 'that God forbid!'—'Well, sir,' said she, 'and thou haddest kissed me thy life dayes had been done; but now, alas!' said she, 'I have lost all my labour; for I ordeined this chappell for thy sake, and for Sir Gawaine: and once I had Sir Gawaine within it; and at that time he fought with that knight which there lieth dead

chappell, Sir Gilbert the bastard, and at that time hee smote off Sir Gilbert the

bastard's left hand. And so, Sir Launcelot, now I tell thee, that I have loved thee this seaven yeare; but there may no woman have thy love but Queene Guenever; but sithen I may not rejoyice thee to have thy body alive, I had kept no more joy in this world but to have had thy dead body; and I would have balmed it and served, and so have kept it in my life daies, and daily I should have clipped thee, and kissed thee, in the despite of Queen Guenever.'—'Yee say well,' said Sir Launcelot; 'Jesus preserve me from your subtill craft.' And therewith he took his horse, and departed from her."

* P. 50.—One day, when Arthur was holding a high feast with his Knights of the Round Table, the Sangreal, or vessel out of which the last passover was eaten (a precious relic, which had long remained concealed from human eyes, because of the sins of the land), suddenly appeared to him and all his chivalry. The consequence of this vision was, that all the knights took on them a solemn vow to seek the Sangreal. But, alas! it could only be revealed to a knight at once accomplished in earthly chivalry, and pure and guiltless of evil conversation. All Sir Launcelot's noble accomplishments were therefore rendered vain by his guilty intrigue with Queen Guenever, or Ganore; and in his holy quest he encountered only such disgraceful disasters as that which follows:—

"But Sir Launcelot rode overthwart and endlong in a wild forest, and held no path but as wild adventure led him; and at the last he came unto a stone crosse, which departed two wayes, in wast land; and by the crosse was a stone that was of marble; but it was so dark that Sir Launcelot might not well know what it was. Then Sir Launcelot looked by him, and saw an old chappell, and there he wend to have found people. And so Sir Launcelot tied his horse to a tree, and there he put off his shield, and hung it upon a tree, and then hee went unto the chappell doore, and found it wasted and broken. And within he found a faire altar, full richly arrayed with cloth of silk, and there stood a faire candlestick, which beare six great candles, and the candlesticke was of silver. And when Sir Launcelot saw this light, hee had a great will for to enter into the chappell, but he could find no place where hee might enter. There was he passing heavie and dismaied. Then he returned, and came againe to his horse, and took off his saddle and his bridle, and let him pasture, and unlaced his helme, and ungirded his sword, and laid him downe to sleepe upon his shield, before the crosse.

"And so he fell on sleepe; and, halfe waking and halfe sleeping, he saw come by him two palfreys, both faire and white, the which beare a litter, therein lying a sicke knight. And when he was nigh the crosse, he there abode still. All this Sir Launcelot saw and beheld, for hee slept not verily, and he heard him say, 'O sweete Lord, when shall this sorrow leave me, and when shall the holy vessel come by me, where through I shall be blessed, for I have endured thus long for little trespasse!' And thus a great while complained the knight, and alwaies Sir Launcelot heard it. With that Sir Launcelot saw the candlesticke, with the fire tapers, come before the crosse; but he could see nobody that brought it. Also there came a table of silver, and the holy vessell of the Sancgreall, the which Sir Launcelot had seen before that time in King Petchour's house. And therewithall the sicke knight set him upright, and held up both his hands, and said, 'Faire sweete Lord, which is here within the holy vessell, take heede to mee, that I may bee hole of this great malady!' And therewith upon his hands, and upon his knees, he went so nigh, that he touched the holy vessell, and kissed it: And anon he was hole, and then he said, 'Lord God, I thank thee, for I am healed of this great malady.' Soo when the holy vessell had been there a great while, it went into the chappelle againe, with the candlesticke and the light, so that Sir Launcelot wist not where it became, for he was overtaken with sinne, that hee had no power to arise against the holy vessell, wherefore afterward many men said of him shame. But he tooke repentance afterward. Then the sicke knight dressed him upright, and kissed the crosse. Then anon his squire brought him his armes, and asked his lord how he did. 'Certainly,' said hee, 'I thanke God right heartily, for through the holy vessell I am healed: But I have right great mervaile of this sleeping knight, which hath had neither grace nor power to awake during the time that this holy vessell hath beene here present.'—'I dare it right well say,' said the squire, 'that this same knight is defouled with some manner of deadly sinne, whereof he has never confessed.'—'By my faith,' said the knight, 'whatsoever he be, he is unhappie; for, as I deeme, he is of the fellowship of the Round Table, the which is entered into the quest of the Sancgreall.'—'Sir,' said the squire, 'here I have brought you all your armes, save your helme and your sword; and, therefore, by mine assent, now may ye take this knight's helme and his sword;' and so he did. And when he was cleane armed, he took Sir Launcelot's horse, for he was better than his owne, and so they departed from the crosse.

"Then anon Sir Launcelot awaked, and set himselfe upright, and he thought him what hee had there seene, and whether it were dreames or not; right so he heard a voice that said, 'Sir Launcelot, more hardy than is the stone, and more bitter than is the wood, and more naked and bare than is the liefe of the fig-tree, therefore go thou from hence, and withdraw thee from this holy place;' and when Sir Launcelot heard this, he was passing heavy, and wist not what to doe. And so he departed sore weeping, and cursed the time that he was borne; for then he deemed never to have had more worship; for the words went unto his heart, till that he knew wherefore that hee was so called."

* P. 50.—Dryden's melancholy account of his projected Epic Poem, blasted by the selfish and sordid parsimony of his patrons, is contained in an "Essay on Satire," addressed to

the Earl of Dorset, and prefixed to the Translation of Juvenal. After mentioning a plan of supplying machinery from the guardian angels of kingdoms, mentioned in the Book of Daniel, he adds :—

"Thus, my lord, I have, as briefly as I could, given your lordship, and by you the world, a rude draught of what I have been long labouring in my imagination, and what I had intended to have put in practice (though far unable for the attempt of such a poem); and to have left the stage, to which my genius never much inclined me, for a work which would have taken up my life in the performance of it. This, too, I had intended chiefly for the honour of my native country, to which a poet is particularly obliged. Of two subjects, both relating to it, I was doubtful whether I should choose that of King Arthur conquering the Saxons, which, being farther distant in time, gives the greater scope to my invention; or that of Edward the Black Prince, in subduing Spain, and restoring it to the lawful prince, though a great tyrant, Don Pedro the Cruel; which, for the compass of time, including only the expedition of one year, for the greatness of the action, and its answerable event, for the magnanimity of the English hero, opposed to the ingratitude of the person whom he restored, and for the many beautiful episodes which I had interwoven with the principal design, together with the characters of the chiefest English persons (wherein, after Virgil and Spenser, I would have taken occasion to represent my living friends and patrons of the noblest families, and also shadowed the events of future ages in the succession of our imperial line),—with these helps, and those of the machines which I have mentioned, I might perhaps have done as well as some of my predecessors, or at least chalked out a way for others to amend my errors in a like design; but being encouraged only with fair words by King Charles II., my little salary ill paid, and no prospect of a future subsistence, I was then discouraged in the beginning of my attempt; and now age has overtaken me, and want, a more insufferable evil, through the change of the times, has wholly disabled me."

* P. 51.—The "History of Bevis of Hampton" is abridged by my friend, Mr. George Ellis, with that liveliness which extracts amusement even out of the most rude and unpromising of our old tales of chivalry. Ascapart, a most important personage in the romance, is thus described in an extract :—

"This geaunt was mighty and strong,
And full thirty foot was long.
He was bristled like a sow;
A foot he had between each brow;
His lips were great, and hung aside;
His eyen were hollow, his mouth was wide;
Lothly he was to look on than,
And liker a devil than a man.
His staff was a young oak,
Hard and heavy was his stroke."

Specimens of Metrical Romances, vol. ii., p. 136.

I am happy to say that the memory of Sir Bevis is still fragrant in his town of Southampton; the gate of which is sentinelled by the effigies of that doughty knight-errant and his gigantic associate.

* P. 51.—The ruinous castle of Norham (anciently called Ubbanford) is situated on the southern bank of the Tweed, about six miles above Berwick, and where that river is still the boundary between England and Scotland. The extent of its ruins, as well as its historical importance, shows it to have been a place of magnificence as well as strength. Edward I. resided there when he was created umpire of the dispute concerning the Scottish succession. It was repeatedly taken and retaken during the wars between England and Scotland; and, indeed, scarce any happened in which it had not a principal share. Norham Castle is situated on a steep bank, which overhangs the river. The repeated sieges which the castle had sustained rendered frequent repairs necessary. In 1164, it was almost rebuilt by Hugh Pudsey, Bishop of Durham, who added a huge keep, or donjon; notwithstanding which, King Henry II., in 1174, took the castle from the bishop, and committed the keeping of it to William de Neville. After this period it seems to have been chiefly garrisoned by the King, and considered as a royal fortress. The Greys of Chillingham Castle were frequently the castellans, or captains of the garrison: yet, as the castle was situated in the patrimony of St. Cuthbert, the property was in the see of Durham till the Reformation. After that period it passed through various hands. At the union of the crowns, it was in the possesion of Sir Robert Carey (afterwards Earl of Monmouth), for his own life, and that of two of his sons. After King James's accession, Carey sold Norham Castle to George Home, Earl of Dunbar, for £6,000. See his curious Memoirs, published by Mr. Constable of Edinburgh.

According to Mr. Pinkerton, there is in the British Museum, Cal. B. 6. 216, a curious memoir of the Dacres on the state of Norham Castle in 1522, not long after the battle of Flodden. The inner ward, or keep, is represented as impregnable :—"The provisions are three great vats of salt eels, forty-four kine, three hogsheads of salted salmon, forty quarters of grain, besides many cows and four hundred sheep, lying under the castle-wall nightly; but a number of the arrows wanted feathers, and a good *Fletcher* [*i.e.*, maker of arrows] was required."—*History of Scotland*, vol. ii., p. 201, note.

The ruins of the castle are at present considerable, as well as picturesque. They consist of a large shattered tower, with many vaults, and fragments of other edifices, enclosed within an outward wall of great circuit.

* P. 51.—It is perhaps unnecessary to remind my readers that the *donjon*, in its proper signification, means the strongest part of a feudal castle; a high square tower, with walls of tremendous thickness, situated in the centre of the other buildings, from which, however, it was usually detached. Here, in case of the outward defences being gained, the garrison retreated to make their last stand. The donjon

contained the great hall, and principal rooms of state for solemn occasions, and also the prison of the fortress; from which last circumstance we derive the modern and restricted use of the word *dungeon*. Ducange (*voce* DUNJO) conjectures plausibly, that the name is derived from these keeps being usually built upon a hill, which in Celtic is called DUN. Borlase supposes the word came from the darkness of the apartments in these towers, which were thence figuratively called Dungeons; thus deriving the ancient word from the modern application of it.

* P. 52.—The artists of Milan were famous in the Middle Ages for their skill in armoury, as appears from the following passage, in which Froissart gives an account of the preparations made by Henry, Earl of Hereford, afterwards Henry IV., and Thomas, Duke of Norfolk, Earl Marischal, for their proposed combat in the lists at Coventry:—"These two lords made ample provision of all things necessary for the combat; and the Earl of Derby sent off messengers to Lombardy, to have armour from Sir Galeas, Duke of Milan. The Duke complied with joy, and gave the knight, called Sir Francis, who had brought the message, the choice of all his armour for the Earl of Derby. When he had selected what he wished for in plated and mail armour, the Lord of Milan, out of his abundant love for the Earl, ordered four of the best armourers in Milan to accompany the knight to England, that the Earl of Derby might be more completely armed."—JOHNES' *Froissart*, vol. iv., p. 597.

* P. 52.—The crest and motto of Marmion are borrowed from the following story:—Sir David de Lindsay, first Earl of Crauford, was, among other gentlemen of quality, attended, during a visit to London in 1390, by Sir William Dalzell, who was, according to my authority, Bower, not only excelling in wisdom, but also of a lively wit. Chancing to be at the Court, he there saw Sir Piers Courtenay, an English knight, famous for skill in tilting, and for the beauty of his person, parading the palace, arrayed in a new mantle, bearing for device an embroidered falcon, with this rhyme—

"I bear a falcon, fairest of flight,
Whoso pinches at her, his death is dight† In graith."‡

The Scottish knight, being a wag, appeared next day in a dress exactly similar to that of Courtenay, but bearing a magpie instead of the falcon, with a motto ingeniously contrived to rhyme to the vaunting inscription of Sir Piers—

"I bear a pie picking at a piece,
Whoso picks at her, I shall pick at his nese,§ In faith."

This affront could only be expiated by a just with sharp lances. In the course, Dalzell left his helmet unlaced, so that it gave way at the touch of his antagonist's lance, and he thus avoided the shock of the encounter. This happened twice: in the third encounter the handsome Courtenay lost two of his front teeth. As the Englishman complained bitterly of Dalzell's fraud in not fastening his helmet, the Scottishman agreed to run six courses more, each champion staking in the hand of the King two hundred pounds, to be forfeited if, on entering the lists, any unequal advantage should be detected. This being agreed to, the wily Scot demanded that Sir Piers, in addition to the loss of his teeth, should consent to the extinction of one of his eyes, he himself having lost an eye in the fight of Otterburn. As Courtenay demurred to this equalisation of optical powers, Dalzell demanded the forfeit, which, after much altercation, the King appointed to be paid to him, saying, he surpassed the English both in wit and valour. This must appear to the reader a singular specimen of the humour of that time. I suspect the Jockey Club would have given a different decision from Henry IV.

† Prepared. ‡ Armour. § Nose.

* P. 52.—Lord Marmion, the principal character of the present romance, is entirely a fictitious personage. In earlier times, indeed, the family of Marmion, Lords of Fontenay, in Normandy, was highly distinguished Robert de Marmion, Lord of Fontenay, a distinguished follower of the Conqueror, obtained a grant of the castle and town of Tamworth, and also of the manor of Scrivelby, in Lincolnshire. One or both of these noble possessions was held by the honourable service of being the Royal Champion, as the ancestors of Marmion had formerly been to the Dukes of Normandy. But after the castle and demesne of Tamworth had passed through four successive barons from Robert, the family became extinct in the person of Philip de Marmion, who died in 20th Edward I. without issue male. He was succeeded in his castle of Tamworth by Alexander de Freville, who married Mazera, his grand-daughter. Baldwin de Freville, Alexander's descendant, in the reign of Richard I., by the supposed tenure of his castle of Tamworth, claimed the office of Royal Champion, and to do the service appertaining; namely, on the day of coronation, to ride, completely armed, upon a barbed horse, into Westminster Hall, and there to challenge the combat against any who would gainsay the King's title. But this office was adjudged to Sir John Dymoke, to whom the Manor of Scrivelby had descended by another of the co-heiresses of Robert de Marmion; and it remains in that family, whose representative is Hereditary Champion of England at the present day. The family and possessions of Freville have merged in the Earls of Ferrars. I have not, therefore, created a new family, but only revived the titles of an old one in an imaginary personage.

It was one of the Marmion family who, in the reign of Edward II., performed that chivalrous feat before the very castle of Norham, which Bishop Percy has woven into his beautiful ballad, "The Hermit of Warkworth." The story is thus told by Leland:—

"The Scottes cam yn to the marches of England, and destroyed the castles of Werk and Herbotel, and overran much of Northumberland marches.

"At this tyme, Thomas Gray and his friendes defended Norham from the Scottes.

"It were a wonderful processe to declare, what mischefes cam by hungre and asseges by the space of xi yeres in Northumberland; for the Scottes became so proude, after they had got Berwick, that they nothing esteemed the Englishmen.

"About this tyme there was a greate feste made yn Lincolnshir, to which came many gentlemen and ladies; and amonge them one lady brought a heaulme for a man of were, with a very riche creste of gold, to William Marmion, knight, with a letter of commandement of her lady, that he should go into the daungerest place in England, and ther to let the heaulme be seene and known as famous. So he went to Norham; whither, within 4 days of cumming, cam Philip Moubray, guardian of Berwicke, having yn his bande 40 men of armes, the very flour of men of the Scottish marches.

"Thomas Gray, capitayne of Norham, seynge this, brought his garrison afore the barriers of the castel, behind whom cam William, richly arrayed, as al glittering in gold, and wearing the heaulme, his lady's present

"Then said Thomas Gray to Marmion, 'Sir Knight, ye be cum hither to fame your helmet: mount up on yowr horse, and ryde lyke a valiant man to yowr foes even here at hand, and I forsake God if I rescue not thy body deade or alyve, or I myself wyl dye for it.'

"Whereupon he toke his cursere, and rode among the throng of ennemyes; the which layed sore stripes on him, and pulled him at the last out of his sadel to the grounde.

"Then Thomas Gray, with al the hole garrison, lette prick yn among the Scottes, and so wondid them and their horses, that they were overthrowan; and Marmion, sore beten, was horsid agayn, and, with Gray, persewed the Scottes yn chase. There were taken 50 horse of price; and the women of Norham brought them to the foote men to follow the chase."

* P. 53.—Were accuracy of any consequence in a fictitious narrative, this castellan's name ought to have been William; for William Heron of Ford was husband to the famous Lady Ford, whose siren charms are said to have cost our James IV. so dear. Moreover, the said William Heron was, at the time supposed, a prisoner in Scotland, being surrendered by Henry VIII., on account of his share in the slaughter of Sir Robert Ker of Cessford. His wife, represented in the text as residing at the Court of Scotland, was, in fact, living in her own castle at Ford.—See Sir RICHARD HERON'S curious *Genealogy of the Heron Family*.

* P. 54.—The story of Perkin Warbeck, or Richard, Duke of York, is well known. In 1496 he was received honourably in Scotland; and James IV., after conferring upon him in marriage his own relation, the Lady Catherine Gordon, made war on England in behalf of his pretensions. To retaliate an invasion of England, Surrey advanced into Berwickshire at the head of considerable forces, but retreated, after taking the inconsiderable fortress of Ayton.

* P. 54.—The garrisons of the English castles of Wark, Norham, and Berwick were, as may be easily supposed, very troublesome neighbours to Scotland. Sir Richard Maitland of Ledington wrote a poem, called "The Blind Baron's Comfort," when his barony of Blythe, in Lauderdale, was *harried* by Rowland Foster, the English captain of Wark, with his company, to the number of 300 men. They spoiled the poetical knight of 5,000 sheep, 200 nolt, 30 horses and mares; the whole furniture of his house of Blythe, worth 100 pounds Scots (£8 6s. 8d.), and everything else that was portable.

* P. 54.—This churchman seems to have been akin to Welsh, the vicar of St. Thomas of Exeter, a leader among the Cornish insurgents in 1549. "This man," says Holinshed, "had many good things in him. He was of no great stature, but well set, and mightilie compact. He was a very good wrestler; shot well, both in the long-bow and also in the cross-bow; he handled his hand-gun and peece very well; he was a very good woodman, and a hardie, and such a one as would not give his head for the polling, or his beard for the washing." This model of clerical talents had the misfortune to be hanged upon the steeple of his own church.

* P. 54.—Santa Rosalia was of Palermo, and born of a very noble family, and when very young, abhorred so much the vanities of this world, and avoided the converse of mankind, resolving to dedicate herself wholly to God Almighty, that she, by divine inspiration, forsook her father's house, and never was more heard of till her body was found in that cleft of a rock, on that almost inaccessible mountain, where now the chapel is built; and they affirm she was carried up there by the hands of angels; for that place was not formerly so accessible (as now it is) in the days of the Saint; and even now it is a very bad, and steepy, and breakneck way. In this frightful place this holy woman lived a great many years, feeding only on what she found growing on that barren mountain, and creeping into a narrow and dreadful cleft in a rock, which was always dropping wet, and was her place of retirement as well as prayer; having worn out even the rock with her knees in a certain place, which is now open'd on purpose to show it to those who come here."—*Voyage to Sicily and Malta*, by Mr. John Dryden (son to the poet), p. 107.

* P. 55.—Friar John understood the soporific virtue of his beads and breviary as well as his namesake in Rabelais. "But Gargantua could not sleep by any means, on which side soever he turned himself. Whereupon the monk said to him, 'I never sleep soundly but when I am at sermon or prayers: Let us therefore begin, you and I, the seven penitential psalms, to try whether you shall not quickly fall asleep.' The conceit pleased Gargantua very well; and beginning the first of these psalms, as soon as they came to *Beati quorum*, they fell asleep, both the one and the other."

* P. 55.—A *Palmer*, opposed to a *Pilgrim*, was one who made it his sole business to visit

different holy shrines; travelling incessantly, and subsisting by charity: whereas the Pilgrim retired to his usual home and occupations, when he had paid his devotions at the particular spot which was the object of his pilgrimage. The Palmers seem to have been the *Questionarii* of the ancient Scottish canons 1242 and 1296.

P. 55.—St. Regulus (*Scottice*, St. Rule), a monk of Patræ, in Achaia, warned by a vision, is said, A.D. 370, to have sailed westward, until he landed at St. Andrews, in Scotland, where he founded a chapel and tower. The latter is still standing, and, though we may doubt the precise date of its foundation, is certainly one of the most ancient edifices in Scotland. A cave, nearly fronting the ruinous castle of the Archbishops of St. Andrews, bears the name of this religious person. It is difficult of access; and the rock in which it is hewn is washed by the German Ocean. It is nearly round, about ten feet in diameter, and the same in height. On one side is a sort of stone altar; on the other, an aperture into an inner den, where the miserable ascetic, who inhabited this dwelling, probably slept. At full tide, egress and regress are hardly practicable. As Regulus first colonised the metropolitan see of Scotland, and converted the inhabitants in the vicinity, he has some reason to complain that the ancient name of Kilrule *(Cella Reguli)* should have been superseded, even in favour of the tutelar saint of Scotland. The reason of the change was, that St. Rule is said to have brought to Scotland the relics of St. Andrew.

* P. 55.—St. Fillan was a Scottish saint of some reputation. Although Popery is, with us, matter of abomination, yet the common people still retain some of the superstitions connected with it. There are in Perthshire several wells and springs dedicated to St. Fillan, which are still places of pilgrimage and offerings, even among the Protestants. They are held powerful in cases of madness; and, in some of very late occurrence, lunatics have been left all night bound to the holy stone, in confidence that the saint would cure and unloose them before morning.

* P. 56.—Ettrick Forest, now a range of mountainous sheep-walks, was anciently reserved for the pleasure of the royal chase. Since it was disparked, the wood has been, by degrees, almost totally destroyed, although, wherever protected from the sheep, copses soon arise without any planting. When the King hunted there, he often summoned the array of the country to meet and assist his sport. Thus, in 1528, James V. made "proclamation to all lords, barons, gentlemen, landward-men, and freeholders, that they should compear at Edinburgh, with a month's victuals, to pass with the King where he pleased, to danton the thieves of Tiviotdale, Annandale, Liddisdale, and other parts of that country; and also warned all gentlemen that had good dogs to bring them, that he might hunt in the said country as he pleased: The whilk the Earl of Argyle, the Earl of Huntley, the Earl of Athole, and so all the rest of the gentlemen of the Highland, did, and brought their hounds with them in like manner, to hunt with the King as he pleased.

"The second day of June the King past out of Edinburgh to the hunting, with many of the nobles and gentlemen of Scotland with him, to the number of twelve thousand men; and then past to Meggitland, and hounded and hawked all the country and bounds; that is to say, Crammat, Pappertlaw, St Mary-laws, Carlavrick, Chapel, Ewindoores, and Longhope. I heard say, he slew, in these bounds, eighteen score of harts."†

These huntings had, of course, a military character, and attendance upon them was a part of the duty of a vassal. The Act for abolishing ward or military tenures in Scotland, enumerates the services of hunting, hosting, watching, and warding, as those which were in future to be illegal

Taylor, the water-poet, has given an account of the mode in which these huntings were conducted in the Highlands of Scotland in the seventeenth century, having been present at Braemar upon such an occasion:—

"There did I find the truly noble and right honourable lords, John Erskine, Earl of Mar; James Stewart, Earl of Murray; George Gordon, Earl of Engye, son and heir to the Marquis of Huntley; James Erskine, Earl of Buchan; and John, Lord Erskine, son and heir to the Earl of Mar, and their Countesses, with my much honoured, and my last assured and approved friend, Sir William Murray, knight of Abercarney, and hundreds of others, knights, esquires, and their followers; all and every man, in general, in one habit, as if Lycurgus had been there, and made laws of equality; for once in the year, which is the whole month of August, and sometimes part of September, many of the nobility and gentry of the kingdom (for their pleasure) do come into these Highland countries to hunt; where they do conform themselves to the habit of the Highlandmen, who, for the most part, speak nothing but Irish; and, in former time, were those people which were called the *Red-shanks*. Their habit is—shoes, with but one sole a-piece; stockings (which they call short-hose), made of a warm stuff of diverse colours, which they call tartan; as for breeches, many of them, nor their forefathers, never wore any, but a jerkin of the same stuff that their hose is of; their garters being bands or wreaths of hay or straw; with a plaid about their shoulders; which is a mantle of diverse colours, much finer and lighter stuff than their hose; with blue flat caps on their heads; a handkerchief, knit with two knots, about their necks: and thus are they attired. Now their weapons are—long bowes and forked arrows, swords and targets, harquebusses, muskets, durks, and Lochaber axes. With these arms I found many of them armed for the hunting. As for their attire, any man, of what degree soever, that comes amongst them, must not disdain to wear it; for, if they do, then they will disdain to hunt, or willingly to bring

† PITSCOTTIE'S *History of Scotland*, folio edition, p. 143.

in their dogs; but if men be kind unto them, and be in their habit, then are they conquered with kindness, and the sport will be plentiful. This was the reason that I found so many noblemen and gentlemen in those shapes. But to proceed to the hunting:—

"My good Lord of Marr having put me into that shape, I rode with him from his house, where I saw the ruins of an old castle, called the Castle of Kindroghit. It was built by King Malcom Canmore (for a hunting-house), who reigned in Scotland when Edward the Confessor, Harold, and Norman William reigned in England. I speak of it, because it was the last house I saw in those parts; for I was the space of twelve days after, before I saw either house, corn-field, or habitation for any creature but deer, wild horses, wolves, and such like creatures,—which made me doubt that I should never have seen a house again.

"Thus, the first day, we travelled eight miles, where there were small cottages, built on purpose to lodge in, which they call Lonquhards. I thank my good Lord Erskine, he commanded that I should always be lodged in his lodging: the kitchen being always on the side of a bank; many kettles and pots boiling, and many spits turning and winding, with great variety of cheer,—as venison baked; sodden, rost, and stewed beef; mutton, goats, kid, hares, fresh salmon, pigeons, hens, capons, chickens, partridges, muir-coots, heath-cocks, caperkellies, and termagants; good ale, sacke, white and claret, tent (or allegant), with most potent aquavitæ.

"All these, and more than these, we had continually in superfluous abundance, caught by falconers, fowlers, fishers, and brought by my lord's tenants and purveyors to victual our camp, which consisteth of fourteen or fifteen hundred men and horses. The manner of the hunting is this: Five or six hundred men do rise early in the morning, and they do disperse themselves divers ways, and seven, eight, or ten miles compass, they do bring, or chase in, the deer in many herds (two, three, or four hundred in a herd), to such or such a place, as the noblemen shall appoint them; then, when day is come, the lords and gentlemen of their companies do ride or go to the said places, sometimes wading up to the middles, through burns and rivers; and then, they being come to the place, do lie down on the ground, till those foresaid scouts, which are called the Tinkhell, do bring down the deer; but, as the proverb says of the bad cook, so these tinkhell men do lick their own fingers; for, besides their bows and arrows, which they carry with them, we can hear, now and then, a harquebuss or a musket go off, which they do seldom discharge in vain. Then, after we had staid there three hours, or thereabouts, we might perceive the deer appear on the hills round about us (their heads making a show like a wood), which, being followed close by the tinkhell, are chased down into the valley where we lay; then all the valley, on each side, being way-laid with a hundred couple of strong Irish greyhounds, they are all let loose, as occasion serves, upon the herd of deer, that with dogs, guns, arrows, durks, and daggers, in the space of two hours, fourscore fat deer were slain; which after are disposed of, some one way, and some another, twenty and thirty miles, and more than enough left for us, to make merry withall, at our rendezvous."

* P. 57.—This beautiful sheet of water forms the reservoir from which the Yarrow takes it course. It is connected with a smaller lake, called the Loch of the Lowes, and surrounded by mountains. In the winter, it is still frequented by flights of wild swans; hence my friend Mr. Wordsworth's lines:—

"The swan on sweet St. Mary's Lake
Floats double, swan and shadow."

Near the lower extremity of the lake are the ruins of Dryhope Tower, the birthplace of Mary Scott, daughter of Philip Scott of Dryhope, and famous by the traditional name of the Flower of Yarrow. She was married to Walter Scott of Harden, no less renowned for his depredations than his bride for her beauty. Her romantic appellation was, in later days, with equal justice, conferred on Miss Mary Lilias Scott, the last of the elder branch of the Harden family. The author well remembers the talent and spirit of the latter Flower of Yarrow, though age had then injured the charms which procured her the name. The words usually sung to the air of "Tweedside," beginning, "What beauties does Flora disclose,' were composed in her honour.

* P. 58.—The chapel of St. Mary of the Lowes *(de lacubus)* was situated on the eastern side of the lake, to which it gives name. It was injured by the clan of Scott, in a feud with the Cranstouns; but continued to be a place of worship during the seventeenth century. The vestiges of the building can now scarcely be traced; but the burial-ground is still used as a cemetery. A funeral, in a spot so very retired, has an uncommonly striking effect. The vestiges of the chaplain's house are yet visible. Being in a high situation, it commanded a full view of the lake, with the opposite mountain of Bourhope, belonging, with the lake itself, to Lord Napier. On the left hand is the tower of Dryhope, mentioned in a preceding note.

* P. 58.—At one corner of the burial-ground of the demolished chapel, but without its precincts, is a small mound, called *Binram's Corse*, where tradition deposits the remains of a necromantic priest, the former tenant of the chaplainry.

* P. 58.—Loch-skene is a mountain lake, of considerable size, at the head of the Moffat-water. The character of the scenery is uncommonly savage; and the earn, or Scottish eagle, has, for many ages, built its nest yearly upon an islet in the lake. Loch-skene discharges itself into a brook, which, after a short and precipitate course, falls from a cataract of immense height and gloomy grandeur, called, from its appearance, the "Grey Mare's Tail." The "Giant's Grave," afterwards mentioned, is a sort of trench, which bears that name, a little way from the foot of the cataract. It

has the appearance of a battery, designed to command the pass.

* P. 58.—Lindisfarne, an isle on the coast of Northumberland, was called Holy Island, from the sanctity of its ancient monastery, and from its having been the Episcopal seat of the See of Durham during the early ages of British Christianity. A succession of holy men held that office: but their merits were swallowed up in the superior fame of St. Cuthbert, who was sixth Bishop of Durham, and who bestowed the name of his "patrimony" upon the extensive property of the See. The ruins of the monastery upon Holy Island betoken great antiquity. The arches are, in general, strictly Saxon, and the pillars which support them, short, strong, and massy. In some places, however, there are pointed windows, which indicate that the building has been repaired at a period long subsequent to the original foundation. The exterior ornaments of the building, being of a light sandy stone, have been wasted, as described in the text. Lindisfarne is not properly an island, but rather, as the venerable Bede has termed it, a semi-isle; for, although surrounded by the sea at full tide, the ebb leaves the sands dry between it and the opposite coast of Northumberland, from which it is about three miles distant.

* P. 61.—She was the daughter of King Oswy, who, in gratitude to Heaven for the great victory which he won in 655, against Penda, the Pagan King of Mercia, dedicated Edelfleda, then but a year old, to the service of God, in the monastery of Whitby, of which St. Hilda was then abbess. She afterwards adorned the place of her education with great magnificence.

* P. 61.—These two miracles are much insisted upon by all ancient writers who have occasion to mention either Whitby or St. Hilda. The relics of the snakes which infested the precincts of the convent, and were, at the abbess's prayer, not only beheaded, but petrified, are still found about the rocks, and are termed by Protestant fossilists, *Ammonitæ*.

The other miracle is thus mentioned by Camden:—"It is also ascribed to the power of her sanctity, that these wild geese, which, in the winter, fly in great flocks to the lakes and rivers unfrozen in the southern parts, to the great amazement of every one, fall down suddenly upon the ground, when they are in their flight over certain neighbouring fields hereabouts: a relation I should not have made, if I had not received it from several credible men. But those who are less inclined to heed superstition, attribute it to some occult quality in the ground, and to somewhat of apathy between it and the geese, such as they say is betwixt wolves and scylla roots: For that such hidden tendencies and aversions, as we call sympathies and antipathies, are implanted in many things by provident Nature for the preservation of them, is a thing so evident that everybody grants it." Mr. Charlton, in his *History of Whitby*, points out the true origin of the fable, from the number of sea-gulls that, when flying from a storm, often alight near Whitby; and from the woodcocks, and other birds of passage, who do the same upon their arrival on shore, after a long flight.

* P. 61.—St. Cuthbert was, in the choice of his sepulchre, one of the most mutable and unreasonable saints in the Calendar. He died A.D. 688, in a hermitage upon the Farne Islands, having resigned the bishopric of Lindisfarne, or Holy Island, about two years before.† His body was brought to Lindisfarne, where it remained until a descent of the Danes, about 793, when the monastery was nearly destroyed. The monks fled to Scotland with what they deemed their chief treasure, the relics of St. Cuthbert. The Saint was, however, a most capricious fellow-traveller; which was the more intolerable, as, like Sinbad's Old Man of the Sea, he journeyed upon the shoulders of his companions. They paraded him through Scotland for several years, and came as far west as Whithern, in Galloway, whence they attempted to sail for Ireland, but were driven back by tempests. He at length made a halt at Norham; from thence he went to Melrose, where he remained stationary for a short time, and then caused himself to be launched upon the Tweed in a stone coffin, which landed him at Tillmouth, in Northumberland.

The resting-place of the remains of this Saint is not now matter of uncertainty. So recently as 17th May, 1827, 1139 years after his death, their discovery and disinterment were effected. Under a blue stone in the middle of the shrine of St. Cuthbert, at the eastern extremity of the choir of Durham Cathedral, there was then found a walled grave, containing the coffins of the Saint. The first, or outer one, was ascertained to be that of 1541, the second of 1041; the third, or inner one, answering in every particular to the description of that of 698, was found to contain, not indeed, as had been averred then, and even until 1539, the incorruptible body, but the entire skeleton of the Saint; the bottom of the grave being perfectly dry, free from offensive smell, and without the slightest symptom that a human body had ever undergone decomposition within its walls. The skeleton was found swathed in five silk robes of emblematical embroidery, the ornamental parts laid with gold leaf, and these again covered with a robe of linen. Beside the skeleton were also deposited several gold and silver *insignia*, and other relics of the Saint.

* P. 61.—Every one has heard, that when David I., with his son Henry, invaded Northumberland in 1136, the English host marched against them under the holy banner of St. Cuthbert; to the efficacy of which was imputed the great victory which they obtained in the bloody battle of Northallerton, or Cutonmoor. The conquerors were at least as much indebted to the jealousy and intractability of the different tribes who composed David's army; among whom, as mentioned in the text, were the Galwegians, the Britons of Strath-Clyde, the men

† He resumed the bishopric of Lindisfarne, which, owing to bad health, he again relinquished within less than three months before his death.—*Raine's St. Cuthbert.*

of Teviotdale and Lothian, with many Norman and German warriors, who asserted the cause of the Empress Maud. See CHALMERS' *Caledonia*, vol. i., p. 622; a most laborious, curious, and interesting publication, from which considerable defects of style and manner ought not to turn aside the Scottish antiquary.

* P. 61.—Cuthbert, we have seen, had no great reason to spare the Danes, when opportunity offered. Accordingly, I find, in Simeon of Durham, that the Saint appeard in a vision to Alfred, when lurking in the marshes of Glastonbury, and promised him assistance and victory over his heathen enemies; a consolation which, as was reasonable, Alfred, after the victory of Ashendown, rewarded by a royal offering at the shrine of the Saint. As to William the Conqueror, the terror spread before his army, when he marched to punish the revolt of the Northumbrians in 1096, had forced the monks to fly once more to Holy Island with the body of the Saint. It was, however, replaced before William left the north; and, to balance accounts, the Conqueror having intimated an indiscreet curiosity to view the Saint's body, he was, while in the act of commanding the shrine to be opened, seized with heat and sickness, accompanied with such a panic terror, that, notwithstanding there was a sumptuous dinner prepared for him, he fled without eating a morsel (which the monkish historian seems to have thought no small part both of the miracle and the penance), and never drew his bridle till he got to the river Tees.

* P. 61.—Although we do not learn that Cuthbert was, during his life, such an artificer as Dunstan, his brother in sanctity, yet, since his death, he has acquired the reputation of forging those *Entrochi* which are found among the rocks of Holy Island, and pass there by the name of St. Cuthbert's Beads. While at this task, he is supposed to sit during the night upon a certain rock, and use another as his anvil. This story was perhaps credited in former days; at least the Saint's legend contains some not more probable.

* P. 61.—Ceowulf, or Colwulf, King of Northumberland, flourished in the eighth century. He was a man of some learning; for the venerable Bede dedicates to him his "Ecclesiastical History." He abdicated the throne about 738, and retired to Holy Island, where he died in the odour of sanctity. Saint as Colwulf was, however, I fear the foundation of the penance-vault does not correspond with his character; for it is recorded among his *memorabilia*, that, finding the air of the island raw and cold, he indulged the monks, whose rule had hitherto confined them to milk or water, with the comfortable privilege of using wine or ale. If any rigid antiquary insists on this objection, he is welcome to suppose the penance-vault was intended, by the founder, for the more genial purposes of a cellar.

* P. 62.—That there was an ancient priory at Tynemouth is certain. Its ruins are situated on a high rocky point; and, doubtless, many a vow was made to the shrine by the distressed mariners who drove towards the iron-bound coast of Northumberland in stormy weather. It was anciently a nunnery; for Virca, abbess of Tynemouth, presented St. Cuthbert (yet alive) with a rare winding-sheet, in emulation of a holy lady called Tuda, who had sent him a coffin: But, as in the case of Whitby, and of Holy Island, the introduction of nuns at Tynemouth in the reign of Henry VIII. is an anachronism. The nunnery at Holy Island is altogether fictitious. Indeed, St. Cuthbert was unlikely to permit such an establishment; for, notwithstanding his accepting the mortuary gifts above-mentioned, and his carrying on a visiting acquaintance with the Abbess of Coldingham, he certainly hated the whole female sex; and, in revenge of a slippery trick played to him by an Irish princess, he, after death, inflicted severe penances on such as presumed to approach within a certain distance of his shrine.

* P. 63.—It is well known that the religious, who broke their vows of chastity, were subjected to the same penalty as the Roman vestals in a similar case. A small niche, sufficient to enclose their bodies, was made in the massive wall of the convent; a slender pittance of food and water was deposited in it; and the awful words, VADE IN PACE, were the signal for immuring the criminal. It is not likely that, in later times, this punishment was often resorted to; but among the ruins of the Abbey of Coldingham were, some years ago, discovered the remains of a female skeleton, which, from the shape of the niche and position of the figure, seemed to be that of an immured nun.

* P. 67.—The accommodations of a Scottish hostelrie, or inn, in the 16th century, may be collected from Dunbar's admirable tale of "The Friars of Berwick." Simon Lawder, "the gay ostlier," seems to have lived very comfortably; and his wife decorated her person with a scarlet kirtle, and a belt of silk and silver, and rings upon her fingers, and feasted her paramour with rabbits, capons, partridges, and Bordeaux wine. At least, if the Scottish inns were not good, it was not for want of encouragement from the legislature, who, so early as the reign of James I., not only enacted that in all boroughs and fairs there be hostellaries, having stables and chambers, and provision for man and horse, but by another statute ordained that no man, travelling on horse or foot, should presume to lodge anywhere except in these hostellaries; and that no person, save innkeepers, should receive such travellers, under the penalty of forty shillings for exercising such hospitality.† But, in spite of these provident enactments, the Scottish hostels are but indifferent, and strangers continue to find reception in the houses of individuals.

* P. 68.—Among other omens to which faithful credit is given among the Scottish peasantry, is what is called the "dead-bell," explained by my friend James Hogg to be that tinkling in the ears which the country people regard as the secret intelligence of some friend's decease.

* P. 69.—A vaulted hall under the ancient

† James I., Parliament i. cap. 24; Parliament iii. cap. 56.

castle of Gifford or Yester (for it bears either name indifferently), the construction of which has from a very remote period been ascribed to magic. The Statistical Account of the Parish of Garvald and Baro gives the following account of the present state of this castle and apartment:—"Upon a peninsula, formed by the water of Hopes on the east and a large rivulet on the west, stands the ancient castle of Yester. Sir David Dalrymple, in his Annals, relates, that 'Hugh Gifford de Yester died in 1267; that in his castle there was a capacious cavern, formed by magical art, and called in the country Bo-Hall, *i.e.*, Hobgoblin Hall.' A stair of twenty-four steps led down to this apartment, which is a large and spacious hall, with an arched roof; and though it hath stood for so many centuries, and been exposed to the external air for a period of fifty or sixty years, it is still as firm and entire as if it had only stood a few years. From the floor of this hall, another stair of thirty-six steps leads down to a pit which hath a communication with Hopes-water. A great part of the walls of this large and ancient castle are still standing. There is a tradition that the castle of Yester was the last fortification, in this country, that surrendered to General Gray, sent into Scotland by Protector Somerset."—*Statistical Account*, vol. xiii. I have only to add, that, in 1737, the Goblin Hall was tenanted by the Marquis of Tweeddale's falconer, as I learn from a poem by Boyse, entitled "Retirement," written upon visiting Yester. It is now rendered inaccessible by the fall of the stair.

* P. 69.—In 1263, Haco, King of Norway, came into the Frith of Clyde with a powerful armament, and made a descent at Largs, in Ayrshire. Here he was encountered and defeated, on the 2nd October, by Alexander III. Haco retreated to Orkney, where he died soon after this disgrace to his arms. There are still existing, near the place of battle, many barrows, some of which, having been opened, were found, as usual, to contain bones and urns.

* P. 70.—"A pentacle is a piece of fine linen, folded with five corners, according to the five senses, and suitably inscribed with characters. This the magician extends towards the spirits which he invokes, when they are stubborn and rebellious, and refuse to be conformable unto the ceremonies and rites of magic."—See the Discourses concerning Devils and Spirits annexed to Reginald Scott's *Discovery of Witchcraft*, ed. 1665, p. 66.

* P. 70.—It is a popular article of faith that those who are born on Christmas, or Good Friday, have the power of seeing spirits, and even of commanding them. The Spaniards imputed the haggard and downcast looks of their Philip II. to the disagreeable visions to which this privilege subjected him.

* P. 71.—The following extract from the Essay upon the Fairy Superstitions, in the "Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border," vol. ii., will show whence many of the particulars of the combat between Alexander III. and the Goblin Knight are derived:—

Gervase of Tilbury (*Otia Imperial ap. Script. rer. Brunsvic.*, vol. I. p. 797) relates the following popular story concerning a fairy knight:—"Osbert, a bold and powerful baron, visited a noble family in the vicinity of Wandlebury, in the bishopric of Ely. Among other stories related in the social circle of his friends, who, according to custom, amused each other by repeating ancient tales and traditions, he was informed, that if any knight, unattended, entered an adjacent plain by moonlight, and challenged an adversary to appear, he would be immediately encountered by a spirit in the form of a knight. Osbert resolved to make the experiment, and set out, attended by a single squire, whom he ordered to remain without the limits of the plain, which was surrounded by an ancient intrenchment. On repeating the challenge, he was instantly assailed by an adversary, whom he quickly unhorsed, and seized the reins of his steed. During this operation, his ghostly opponent sprung up, and darting his spear, like a javelin, at Osbert, wounded him in the thigh. Osbert returned in triumph with the horse, which he committed to the care of his servants. The horse was of a sable colour, as well as his whole accoutrements, and apparently of great beauty and vigour. He remained with his keeper till cock-crowing, when, with eyes flashing fire, he reared, spurned the ground, and vanished. On disarming himself, Osbert perceived that he was wounded, and that one of his steel boots was full of blood." Gervase adds, that, "as long as he lived, the scar of his wound opened afresh on the anniversary of the eve on which he encountered the spirit." Less fortunate was the gallant Bohemian knight, who, travelling by night with a single companion, "came in sight of a fairy host, arrayed under displayed banners. Despising the remonstrances of his friend, the knight pricked forward to break a lance with a champion, who advanced from the ranks apparently in defiance. His companion beheld the Bohemian overthrown, horse and man, by his aerial adversary; and returning to the spot next morning, he found the mangled corpses of the knight and steed."—*Hierarchy of Blessed Angels*, p. 554.

Besides these instances of Elfin chivalry above quoted, many others might be alleged in support of employing fairy machinery in this manner. The forest of Glenmore, in the North Highlands, is believed to be haunted by a spirit called *Lham-dearg*, in the array of an ancient warrior, having a bloody hand, from which he takes his name. He insists upon those with whom he meets doing battle with him; and the clergyman, who makes up an account of the district, extant in the Macfarlane MS. in the Advocates' Library, gravely assures us, that, in his time, *Lham-dearg* fought with three brothers whom he met in his walk, none of whom long survived the ghostly conflict. Barclay, in his "Euphormion," gives a singular account of an officer who had ventured, with his servant, rather to intrude upon a haunted house in a town in Flanders, than to put up with worse quarters elsewhere. After taking the usual precautions of providing fires, lights, and arms, they watched till midnight, when

behold! the severed arm of a man dropped from the ceiling; this was followed by the legs, the other arm, the trunk, and the head of the body, all separately. The members rolled together, united themselves in the presence of the astonished soldiers, and formed a gigantic warrior, who defied them both to combat. Their blows, although they penetrated the body and amputated the limbs of their strange antagonist, had, as the reader may easily believe, little effect on an enemy who possessed such powers of self-union; nor did his efforts make more effectual impression upon them. How the combat terminated I do not exactly remember, and have not the book by me; but I think the spirit made to the intruders on his mansion the usual proposal, that they should renounce their redemption; which being declined, he was obliged to retract.

The northern champions of old were accustomed peculiarly to search for, and delight in, encounters with such military spectres. See a whole chapter on the subject, in BARTHOLINUS, *De Causis contemptæ Mortis a Danis*, p. 253.

* P. 73.—I cannot help here mentioning, that, on the night in which these lines were written, suggested, as they were, by a sudden fall of snow, beginning after sunset, an unfortunate man perished exactly in the manner here described, and his body was next morning found close to his own house. The accident happened within five miles of the farm of Ashestiel.

* P. 73.—Sir William Forbes of Pitsligo, Baronet; unequalled, perhaps, in the degree of individual affection entertained for him by his friends, as well as in the general respect and esteem of Scotland at large. His "Life of Beattie," whom he befriended and patronised in life, as well as celebrated after his decease, was not long published, before the benevolent and affectionate biographer was called to follow the subject of his narrative. This melancholy event very shortly succeeded the marriage of the friend to whom this Introduction is addressed with one of Sir William's daughters.

* P. 74.—*Alias* "Will o' the Wisp." This personage is a strolling demon, or *esprit follet*, who, once upon a time, got admittance into a monastery as a scullion, and played the monks many pranks. He was also a sort of Robin Goodfellow, and Jack o' Lanthern. It is in allusion to this mischievous demon that Milton's clown speaks,—

"She was pinch'd, and pull'd, she said,
And he by *Friar's lanthern* led."

"The History of Friar Rush" is of extreme rarity, and, for some time, even the existence of such a book was doubted, although it is expressly alluded to by Reginald Scott, in his "Discovery of Witchcraft." I have perused a copy in the valuable library of my friend Mr. Heber; and I observe, from Mr. Beloe's "Anecdotes of Literature," that there is one in the excellent collection of the Marquis of Stafford.

* P. 76.—A large ruinous castle on the banks of the Tyne, about ten miles from Edinburgh. As indicated in the text, it was built at different times, and with a very differing regard to splendour and accommodation. The oldest part of the building is a narrow keep, or tower, such as formed the mansion of a lesser Scottish baron; but so many additions have been made to it, that there is now a large court-yard, surrounded by buildings of different ages. The eastern front of the court is raised above a portico, and decorated with entablatures, bearing anchors. All the stones of this front are cut into diamond facets, the angular projections of which have an uncommonly rich appearance. The inside of this part of the building appears to have contained a gallery of great length and uncommon elegance. Access was given to it by a magnificent staircase, now quite destroyed. The soffits are ornamented with twining cordage and rosettes; and the whole seems to have been far more splendid than was usual in Scottish castles. The castle belonged originally to the Chancellor, Sir William Crichton, and probably owed to him its first enlargement, as well as its being taken by the Earl of Douglas, who imputed to Crichton's counsels the death of his predecessor, Earl William, beheaded in Edinburgh Castle, with his brother, in 1440. It is said to have been totally demolished on that occasion; but the present state of the ruin shows the contrary. In 1483, it was garrisoned by Lord Crichton, then its proprietor, against King James III., whose displeasure he had incurred by seducing his sister Margaret, in revenge, it is said, for the Monarch having dishonoured his bed. From the Crichton family the castle passed to that of the Hepburns, Earls of Bothwell; and when the forfeitures of Stewart, the last Earl of Bothwell, were divided, the barony and castle of Crichton fell to the share of the Earl of Buccleuch. They were afterwards the property of the Pringles of Clifton, and are now that of Sir John Callander, Baronet. It were to be wished the proprietor would take a little pains to preserve these splendid remains of antiquity, which are at present used as a fold for sheep, and wintering cattle; although, perhaps, there are very few ruins in Scotland which display so well the style and beauty of ancient castle-architecture. The castle of Crichton has a dungeon vault, called the *Massy More*. The epithet, which is not uncommonly applied to the prisons of other old castles in Scotland, is of Saracenic origin. It occurs twice in the "*Epistolæ Itinerariæ*" of Tollius:—"*Carcer subterraneus, sive, ut Mauri appellant* MAZMORRA," p. 147; and again—"*Coguntur omnes Captivi sub noctem in ergastula subterranea, quæ Turcæ Algezerani vocant* MAZMORRAS," p. 243. The same word applies to the dungeons of the ancient Moorish castles in Spain, and serves to show from what nation the Gothic style of castle-building was originally derived.

* P. 76.—He was the second Earl of Bothwell, and fell in the field of Flodden, where, according to an ancient English poet, he distinguished himself by a furious attempt to retrieve the day:—

"Then on the Scottish part, right proud,
The Earl of Bothwell then out brast

And stepping forth, with stomach good,
Into the enemies' throng he thrast;
And *Bothwell! Bothwell!* cried bold,
To cause his souldiers to ensue,
But there he caught a wellcome cold,
The Englishmen straight down him threw.
Thus Haburn through his hardy heart
His fatal fine in conflict found," &c.

Flodden Field, a Poem: edited by H. Weber. Edin. 1808.

Adam was grandfather to James, Earl of Bothwell, too well known in the history of Queen Mary.

* P. 76.—This story is told by Pitscottie with characteristic simplicity:—

"The King, seeing that France could get no support of him for that time, made a proclamation, full hastily, through all the realm of Scotland, both east and west, south and north, as well in the isles as in the firm land, to all manner of men beween sixty and sixteen years, that they should be ready, within twenty days, to pass with him, with forty days' victual, and to meet at the Burrow-muir of Edinburgh, and there to pass forward where he pleased. His proclamations were hastily obeyed, contrary to the Council of Scotland's will; but every man loved his Prince so well, that they would on no ways disobey him; but every man caused make his proclamation so hastily, conform to the charge of the King's proclamation.

"The King came to Lithgow, where he happened to be for the time at the Council, very sad and dolorous, making his devotion to God, to send him good chance and fortune in his voyage. In this meantime there came a man, clad in a blue gown, in at the kirk door, and belted about him in a roll of linen cloth; a pair of brotikins [buskins] on his feet, to the great of his legs; with all other hose and clothes conform thereto: but he had nothing on his head, but syde [long] red yellow hair behind, and on his haffets [cheeks], which wan down to his shoulders; but his forehead was bald and bare. He seemed to be a man of two-and-fifty years, with a great pike-staff in his hand, and came first forward among the lords, crying and speiring [asking] for the King, saying, he desired to speak with him. While, at the last, he came where the King was sitting in the desk at his prayers; but when he saw the King, he made him little reverence or salutation, but leaned down groffling on the desk before him, and said to him in this manner, as after follows:—'Sir King, my mother hath sent me to you, desiring you not to pass, at this time, where thou art purposed; for if thou does, thou wilt not fare well in thy journey, nor none that passeth with thee. Further, she bade thee mell [meddle] with no woman, nor use their counsel, nor let them touch thy body, nor thou theirs; for if thou do it, thou wilt be confounded and brought to shame.'

"By this man had spoken thir words unto the King's grace, the evening song was near done, and the King paused on thir words, studying to give him an answer; but, in the meantime, before the King's eyes, and in the presence of all the lords that were about him for the time, this man vanished away, and could no ways be seen or comprehended, but vanished away as he had been a blink of the sun, or a whip of the whirlwind, and could no more be seen. I heard say, Sir David Lindesay Lyon-herauld, and John Inglis the marshal, who were, at that time, young men, and special servants to the King's grace, were standing presently beside the King, who thought to have laid hands on this man, that they might have speired further tidings at him: But all for nought; they could not touch him; for he vanished away betwixt them, and was no more seen."

* P. 77.—I am glad of an opportunity to describe the cry of the deer by another word than *braying*, although the latter has been sanctified by the use of the Scottish metrical translation of the Psalms. *Bell* seems to be an abbreviation of bellow. This sylvan sound conveyed great delight to our ancestors, chiefly, I suppose, from association. A gentle knight in the reign of Henry VIII., Sir Thomas Wortley, built Wantley Lodge, in Wancliffe Forest, for the pleasure (as an ancient inscription testifies) of "listening to the hart's *bell*."

* P. 77.—The rebellion against James III. was signalised by the cruel circumstance of his son's presence in the hostile army. When the King saw his own banner displayed against him, and his son in the faction of his enemies, he lost the little courage he had ever possessed, fled out of the field, fell from his horse as it started at a woman and water-pitcher, and was slain, it is not well understood by whom. James IV., after the battle, passed to Stirling, and hearing the monks of the chapel-royal deploring the death of his father, their founder, he was seized with deep remorse, which manifested itself in severe penances. (See following note to page 84.) The battle of Sauchieburn, in which James III. fell, was fought 18th June, 1488.

* P. 79.—The Borough, or Common Moor of Edinburgh, was of very great extent, reaching from the southern walls of the city to the bottom of Braid Hills. It was anciently a forest; and, in that state, was so great a nuisance, that the inhabitants of Edinburgh had permission granted to them of building wooden galleries, projecting over the street, in order to encourage them to consume the timber, which they seem to have done very effectually. When James IV. mustered the array of the kingdom there, in 1513, the Borough-moor was, according to Hawthornden, "a field spacious, and delightful by the shade of many stately and aged oaks." Upon that, and similar occasions, the royal standard is traditionally said to have been displayed from the Hare-Stane, a high stone, now built into the wall, on the left hand of the highway leading towards Braid, not far from the head of Bruntsfield Links. The Hare-Stane probably derives its name from the British word *Har*, signifying an army.

* P. 79.—The well-known arms of Scotland. If you will believe Boethius and Buchanan, the double tressure round the shield, mentioned, *counter fleur-de-lysed or lingued and armed*

aswre, was first assumed by Echains, King of Scotland, contemporary of Charlemagne, and founder of the celebrated League with France; but later antiquaries make poor Eochy, or Achy, little better than a sort of King of Brentford, whom old Grig (who has also swelled into Gregorius Magnus) associated with himself in the important duty of governing some part of the north-eastern coast of Scotland.

* P. 80.—The Old Town of Edinburgh was secured on the north side by a lake, now drained, and on the south by a wall, which there was some attempt to make defensible even so late as 1745. The gates, and the greater part of the wall, have been pulled down, in the course of the late extensive and beautiful enlargement of the city. My ingenious and valued friend, Mr. Thomas Campbell, proposed to celebrate Edinburgh under the epithet here borrowed. But the "Queen of the North" has not been so fortunate as to receive from so eminent a pen the proposed distinction.

* P. 82.—This is no poetical exaggeration. In some of the counties of England, distinguished for archery, shafts of this extraordinary length were actually used. Thus, at the battle of Blackheath, between the troops of Henry VII. and the Cornish insurgents, in 1496, the bridge of Dartford was defended by a picked band of archers from the rebel army, "whose arrows," says Hollinshed, "were in length a full cloth yard." The Scottish, according to Ascham, had a proverb, that every English archer carried under his belt twenty-four Scots, in allusion to his bundle of unerring shafts.

* P. 82.—The Scottish burgesses were, like yeomen, appointed to be armed with bows and sheaves, sword, buckler, knife, spear, or a good axe instead of a bow, if worth £100; their armour to be of white or bright harness. They wore *white hats*., i.e., bright steel caps, without crest or visor. By an Act of James IV., their *weapon-schawings* are appointed to be held four times a-year, under the aldermen or bailiffs.

* P. 82.—Bows and quivers were in vain recommended to the peasantry of Scotland, by repeated statutes; spears and axes seem universally to have been used instead of them. Their defensive armour was the plate-jack, hauberk, or brigantine; and their missile weapons cross-bows and culverins. All wore swords of excellent temper, according to Patten; and a voluminous handkerchief round their neck, "not for cold, but for cutting." The mace also was much used in the Scottish army: The old poem on the battle of Flodden mentions a band—

> "Who manfully did meet their foes,
> With leaden mauls, and lances long."

When the feudal array of the kingdom was called forth, each man was obliged to appear with forty days' provision. When this was expended, which took place before the battle of Flodden, the army melted away of course. Almost all the Scottish forces, except a few knights, men-at-arms, and the Border-prickers, who formed excellent light cavalry, acted upon foot.

* P. 83.—In all transactions of great or petty importance, and among whomsoever taking place, it would seem that a present of wine was a uniform and indispensable preliminary. It was not to Sir John Falstaff alone that such an introductory preface was necessary, however well judged and acceptable on the part of Mr. Brook; for Sir Ralph Sadler, while on an embassy to Scotland in 1539–40, mentions, with complacency, "the same night came Rothesay (the herald so called) to me again, and brought me wine from the King, both white and red."—*Clifford's Edition*, p. 39.

* P. 84.—Few readers need to be reminded of this belt, to the weight of which James added certain ounces every year that he lived. Pitscottie founds his belief, that James was not slain in the battle of Flodden, because the English never had this token of the iron belt to show to any Scottishman. The person and character of James are delineated according to our best historians. His romantic disposition, which led him highly to relish gaiety, approaching to license, was, at the same time, tinged with enthusiastic devotion. These propensities sometimes formed a strange contrast. He was wont, during his fits of devotion, to assume the dress, and conform to the rules, of the order of Franciscans; and when he had thus done penance for some time in Stirling, to plunge again into the tide of pleasure. Probably, too, with no unusual inconsistency, he sometimes laughed at the superstitious observances to which he at other times subjected himself.

* P. 84.—It has been already noticed (see note to stanza xiii. of canto i.) that King James's acquaintance with Lady Heron of Ford did not commence until he marched into England. Our historians impute to the King's infatuated passion the delays which led to the fatal defeat of Flodden. The author of "The Genealogy of the Heron Family" endeavours, with laudable anxiety, to clear the Lady Ford from this scandal; that she came and went, however, between the armies of James and Surrey is certain. See PINKERTON'S *History*, and the authorities he refers to, vol. ii., p. 99.

* P. 84.—"Also the Queen of France wrote a love-letter to the King of Scotland, calling him her love, showing him that she had suffered much rebuke in France for the defending of his honour. She believed surely that he would recompense her again with some of his kingly support in her necessity; that is to say, that he would raise her an army, and come three foot of ground on English ground, for her sake. To that effect she sent him a ring off her finger, with fourteen thousand French crowns to pay his expenses." PITSCOTTIE, p. 110.—A turquois ring: probably this fatal gift is, with James's sword and dagger, preserved in the College of Heralds, London.

* P. 86.—Archibald Douglas, Earl of Angus, a man remarkable for strength of body and mind, acquired the popular name of *Bell-the-*

Cat upon the following remarkable occasion:—James the Third, of whom Pitscottie complains that he delighted more in music and "policies of building" than in hunting, hawking, and other noble exercises, was so ill advised as to make favourites of his architects and musicians, whom the same historian irreverently terms masons and fiddlers. His nobility, who did not sympathise in the King's respect for the fine arts, were extremely incensed at the honours conferred on those persons, particularly on Cochrane, a mason, who had been created Earl of Mar; and, seizing the opportunity when, in 1482, the King had convoked the whole array of the country to march against the English, they held a midnight council in the church of Lauder, for the purpose of forcibly removing these minions from the King's person. When all had agreed on the propriety of this measure, Lord Gray told the assembly the apologue of the Mice, who had formed a resolution that it would be highly advantageous to their community to tie a bell round the cat's neck, that they might hear her approach at a distance; but which public measure unfortunately miscarried, from no mouse being willing to undertake the task of fastening the bell. "I understand the moral," said Angus, "and, that what we propose may not lack execution, I will *bell the cat*."

* P. 86.—Angus was an old man when the war against England was resolved upon. He earnestly spoke against that measure from its commencement; and, on the eve of the battle of Flodden, remonstrated so freely upon the impolicy of fighting, that the King said to him, with scorn and indignation, "if he was afraid he might go home." The Earl burst into tears at this insupportable insult, and retired accordingly, leaving his sons George, Master of Angus, and Sir William of Glenbervie, to command his followers. They were both slain in the battle, with two hundred gentlemen of the name of Douglas. The aged Earl, broken-hearted at the calamities of his house and his country, retired into a religious house, where he died about a year after the field of Flodden.

* P. 86.—The ruins of Tantallon Castle occupy a high rock projecting into the German Ocean, about two miles east of North Berwick. The building formed a principal castle of the Douglas family, and when the Earl of Angus was banished, in 1527, it continued to hold out against James V. The King went in person against it, and for its reduction, borrowed from the Castle of Dunbar, then belonging to the Duke of Albany, two great cannons, "Thrawn-mouth'd Meg and her Marrow;" also, "two great botcards, and two moyan, two double falcons, and four quarter falcons." Yet, notwithstanding all this apparatus, James was forced to raise the siege, and only afterwards obtained possession of Tantallon by treaty with the governor, Simon Panango. When the Earl of Angus returned from banishment, upon the death of James, he again obtained possession of Tantallon, and it actually afforded refuge to an English ambassador, under circumstances similar to those described in the text. This was no other than the celebrated Sir Ralph Sadler, who resided there for some time under Angus's protection, after the failure of his negotiation for matching the infant Mary with Edward VI.

* P. 86.—A very ancient sword, in possession of Lord Douglas, bears, among a great deal of flourishing, two hands pointing to a heart, which is placed betwixt them, and the date 1329, being the year in which Bruce charged the Good Lord Douglas to carry his heart to the Holy Land.

* P. 87.—A German general, who commanded the auxiliaries sent by the Duchess of Burgundy with Lambert Simnel. He was defeated and killed at Stokefield. The name of this German general is preserved by that of the field of battle, which is called, after him, Swartmoor. There are songs about him long current in England. — See Dissertation prefixed to RITSON'S *Ancient Songs*, 1792, p. lxi.

* P. 88.—The Cross of Edinburgh was an ancient and curious structure. The lower part was an octagonal tower, sixteen feet in diameter, and about fifteen feet high. At each angle there was a pillar, and between them an arch, of the Grecian shape. Above these was a projecting battlement, with a turret at each corner, and medallions, of rude but curious workmanship, between them. Above this rose the proper Cross, a column of one stone, upwards of twenty feet high, surmounted with a unicorn. This pillar was preserved in the grounds of the property of Drum, near Edinburgh, and now stands within the railings of the Cathedral Church (St. Giles's) of Edinburgh.

* P. 89.—This supernatural citation is mentioned by all our Scottish historians. It was, probably, like the apparition at Linlithgow, an attempt, by those averse to the war, to impose upon the superstitious temper of James IV.

* P. 90.—This relates to the catastrophe of a real Robert de Marmion, in the reign of King Stephen, whom William of Newbury describes with some attributes of my fictitious hero: *Homo bellicosus, ferocia, et astucia fere nullo suo tempore impar.*" This Baron, having expelled the monks from the church of Coventry, was not long of experiencing the Divine judgment, as the same monks, no doubt, termed his disaster. Having waged a feudal war with the Earl of Chester, Marmion's horse fell, as he charged in the van of his troop against a body of the Earl's followers: the rider's thigh being broken by the fall, his head was cut off by a common foot-soldier, ere he could receive any succour. The whole story is told by William of Newbury.

* P. 91.—The Iol of the heathen Danes (a word still applied to Christmas in Scotland) was solemnised with great festivity. The humour of the Danes at table displayed itself in pelting each other with bones; and Torfæus tells a long and curious story, in the History of Hrolfe Kraka, of one Hottus, an inmate of the Court of Denmark, who was so generally assailed with these missiles, that he constructed, out of the bones with which he was over-

whelmed, a very respectable entrenchment, against those who continued the raillery.

* P. 91.—In Roman Catholic countries, mass is never said at night except on Christmas Eve.

* P. 92.—It seems certain that the *Mummers* of England, who (in Northumberland at least) used to go about in disguise to the neighbouring houses, bearing the then useless ploughshare; and the *Guisards* of Scotland, not yet in total disuse, present, in some indistinct degree, a shadow of the old mysteries, which were the origin of the English drama. In Scotland *(me ipso teste)*, we were wont, during my boyhood, to take the characters of the apostles, at least of Peter, Paul, and Judas Iscariot; the first had the keys, the second carried a sword, and the last the bag, in which the dole of our neighbours' plum-cake was deposited. One played a champion, and recited some traditional rhymes; another was

"Alexander, King of Macedon,
Who conquer'd all the world but Scotland alone."

These, and many such verses, were repeated, but by rote, and unconnectedly. There was also, occasionally, I believe, a Saint George. In all, there was a confused resemblance of the ancient mysteries, in which the characters of Scripture, the Nine Worthies, and other popular personages, were usually exhibited.

* P. 93.—The *Daoine shi'*, or *Men of Peace*, of the Scottish Highlanders, rather resemble the Scandinavian *Duergar* than the English Fairies. Notwithstanding their name, they are, if not absolutely malevolent, at least peevish, discontented, and apt to do mischief on slight provocation. The belief of their existence is deeply impressed on the Highlanders, who think they are particularly offended at mortals who talk of them, who wear their favourite colour, green, or in any respect interfere with their affairs. This is especially to be avoided on Friday, when, whether as dedicated to Venus, with whom, in Germany, this subterraneous people are held nearly connected, or for a more solemn reason, they are more active, and possessed of greater power. Some curious particulars concerning the popular superstitions of the Highlanders may be found in Dr. Graham's "Picturesque Sketches of Perthshire."

* P. 93.—The journal of the friend to whom the Fourth Canto of the Poem is inscribed, furnished me with the following account of a striking superstition.

"Passed the pretty little village of Franchémont (near Spaw), with the romantic ruins of the old castle of the Counts of that name. The road leads through many delightful vales on a rising ground; at the extremity of one of them stands the ancient castle, now the subject of many superstitious legends. It is firmly believed by the neighbouring peasantry, that the last Baron of Franchémont deposited, in one of the vaults of the castle, a ponderous chest, containing an immense treasure in gold and silver, which, by some magic spell, was intrusted to the care of the Devil, who is constantly found sitting on the chest in the shape of a huntsman. Any one adventurous enough to touch the chest is instantly seized with the palsy. Upon one occasion, a priest of noted piety was brought to the vault: he used all the arts of exorcism to persuade his infernal majesty to vacate his seat, but in vain; the huntsman remained immovable. At last, moved by the earnestness of the priest, he told him that he would agree to resign the chest, if the exorciser would sign his name with blood. But the priest understood his meaning, and refused, as by that act he would have delivered over his soul to the Devil. Yet if anybody can discover the mystic words used by the person who deposited the treasure, and pronounce them, the fiend must instantly decamp. I had many stories of a similar nature from a peasant, who had himself seen the Devil in the shape of a great cat."

* P. 96.—The Earl of Angus had strength and personal activity corresponding to his courage. Spens of Kilspindie, a favourite of James IV., having spoken of him lightly, the Earl met him while hawking, and, compelling him to single combat, at one blow cut asunder his thigh-bone, and killed him on the spot. But ere he could obtain James's pardon for this slaughter, Angus was obliged to yield his castle of Hermitage in exchange for that of Bothwell, which was some diminution to the family greatness. The sword with which he struck so remarkable a blow, was presented by his descendant James, Earl of Morton, afterwards Regent of Scotland, to Lord Lindesay of the Byres, when he defied Bothwell to single combat on Carberry Hill. See Introduction to *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*.

* P. 97.—This ebullition of violence in the potent Earl of Angus is not without its example in the real history of the house of Douglas, whose chieftains possessed the ferocity, with the heroic virtues of a savage state. The most curious instance occurred in the case of Maclellan, Tutor of Bombay, who, having refused to acknowledge the pre-eminence claimed by Douglas over the gentlemen and Barons of Galloway, was seized and imprisoned by the Earl, in his castle of the Thrieve, on the borders of Kirkcudbrightshire. Sir Patrick Gray, commander of King James the Second's guard, was uncle to the Tutor of Bombay, and obtained from the King a "sweet letter of supplication," praying the Earl to deliver his prisoner into Gray's hand. When Sir Patrick arrived at the castle, he was received with all the honour due to a favourite servant of the King's household; but while he was at dinner, the Earl, who suspected his errand, caused his prisoner to be led forth and beheaded. After dinner, Sir Patrick presented the King's letter to the Earl, who received it with great affectation of reverence; "and took him by the hand, and led him forth to the green, where the gentleman was lying dead, and showed him the manner, and said, 'Sir Patrick, you are come a little too late; yonder is your sister's son lying, but he wants the head: take his body, and do with it what you will.'—Sir Patrick answered again, with a sore heart, and said,

'My lord, if ye have taken from him his head, dispone upon the body as ye please;' and with that called for his horse, and leaped thereon; and when he was on horseback, he said to the Earl in this manner, 'My lord, if I live, you shall be rewarded for your labours that you have used at this time, according to your demerits.'

"At this saying the Earl was highly offended, and cried for horse. Sir Patrick, seeing the Earl's fury, spurred his horse, but he was chased near Edinburgh ere they left him; and had it not been his led horse was so tried and good, he had been taken." — PITSCOTTIE'S *History*, p. 39.

* P. 97.—Lest the reader should partake of the Earl's astonishment, and consider the crime as inconsistent with the manners of the period, I have to remind him of the numerous forgeries (partly executed by a female assistant) devised by Robert of Artois, to forward his suit against the Countess Matilda; which, being detected, occasioned his flight into England, and proved the remote cause of Edward the Third's memorable wars in France. John Harding, also, was expressly hired by Edward VI. to forge such documents as might appear to establish the claim of fealty asserted over Scotland by the English monarchs.

* P. 98.—On the evening previous to the memorable battle of Flodden, Surrey's head-quarters were at Barmoor Wood, and King James held an inaccessible position on the ridge of Flodden-hill, one of the last and lowest eminences detached from the ridge of Cheviot. The Till, a deep and slow river, winded between the armies. On the morning of the 9th September, 1513, Surrey marched in a north-westerly direction, and crossed the Till, with his van and artillery, at Twisel Bridge, nigh where that river joins the Tweed, his rear-guard column passing about a mile higher, by a ford. This movement had the double effect of placing his army between King James and his supplies from Scotland, and of striking the Scottish monarch with surprise, as he seems to have relied on the depth of the river in his front. But as the passage, both over the bridge and through the ford, was difficult and slow, it seems possible that the English might have been attacked to great advantage while struggling with these natural obstacles. I know not if we are to impute James's forbearance to want of military skill, or to the romantic declaration which Pitscottie puts in his mouth, "that he was determined to have his enemies before him on a plain field," and therefore would suffer no interruption to be given, even by artillery, to their passing the river.

* P. 99.—The reader cannot here expect a full account of the battle of Flodden; but, so far as is necessary to understand the romance, I beg to remind him, that, when the English army, by their skilful countermarch, were fairly placed between King James and his own country, the Scottish monarch resolved to fight; and, setting fire to his tents, descended from the ridge of Flodden to secure the neighbouring eminence of Brankstone, on which that village is built. Thus the two armies met, almost without seeing each other, when, according to the old poem of "Flodden Field,"

> "The English line stretch'd east and west,
> And southward were their faces set;
> The Scottish northward proudly prest,
> And manfully their foes they met."

The English army advanced in four divisions. On the right, which first engaged, were the sons of Earl Surrey, namely, Thomas Howard, the Admiral of England, and Sir Edmund, the Knight-Marshal of the army. Their divisions were separated from each other; but, at the request of Sir Edmund, his brother's battalion was drawn very near to his own. The centre was commanded by Surrey in person; the left wing by Sir Edward Stanley, with the men of Lancashire, and of the palatinate of Chester. Lord Dacre, with a large body of horse, formed a reserve. When the smoke, which the wind had driven between the armies, was somewhat dispersed, they perceived the Scots, who had moved down the hill in a similar order of battle, and in deep silence. The Earls of Huntly and of Home commanded their left wing, and charged Sir Edmund Howard with such success as entirely to defeat his part of the English right wing. Sir Edmund's banner was beaten down, and he himself escaped with difficulty to his brother's division. The Admiral, however, stood firm; and Dacre advancing to his support with the reserve of cavalry, probably between the interval of the divisions commanded by the brothers Howard, appears to have kept the victors in effectual check. Home's men, chiefly Borderers, began to pillage the baggage of both armies; and their leader is branded by the Scottish historians with negligence or treachery. On the other hand, Huntly, on whom they bestow many encomiums, is said by the English historians to have left the field after the first charge. Meanwhile the Admiral, whose flank these chiefs ought to have attacked, availed himself of their inactivity, and pushed forward against another large division of the Scottish army in his front, headed by the Earls of Crawford and Montrose, both of whom were slain, and their forces routed. On the left, the success of the English was yet more decisive; for the Scottish right wing, consisting of undisciplined Highlanders, commanded by Lennox and Argyle, was unable to sustain the charge of Sir Edward Stanley, and especially the severe execution of the Lancashire archers. The King and Surrey, who commanded the respective centres of their armies, were meanwhile engaged in close and dubious conflict. James, surrounded by the flower of his kingdom, and impatient of the galling discharge of arrows, supported also by his reserve under Bothwell, charged with such fury that the standard of Surrey was in danger. At that critical moment, Stanley, who had routed the left wing of the Scottish, pursued his career of victory, and arrived on the right flank, and in the rear of James's division, which, throwing itself into a circle, disputed the battle till night came

on. Surrey then drew back his forces; for the Scottish centre not having been broken, and their left wing being victorious, he yet doubted the event of the field. The Scottish army, however, felt their loss, and abandoned the field of battle in disorder, before dawn. They lost, perhaps, from eight to ten thousand men; but that included the very prime of their nobility, gentry, and even clergy. Scarce a family of eminence but has an ancestor killed at Flodden; and there is no province in Scotland, even at this day, where the battle is mentioned without a sensation of terror and sorrow. The English lost also a great number of men, perhaps within one-third of the vanquished, but they were of inferior note.

* P. 100.—Sir Brian Tunstall, called, in the romantic language of the time, Tunstall the Undefiled, was one of the few Englishmen of rank slain at Flodden. He figures in the ancient English poem, to which I may safely refer my readers: as an edition, with full explanatory notes, has been published by my friend, Mr. Henry Weber. Tunstall, perhaps, derived his epithet of *undefiled* from his white armour and banner, the latter bearing a white cock, about to crow, as well as from his unstained loyalty and knightly faith. His place of residence was Thurland Castle.

* P. 103.—There can be no doubt that King James fell in the battle of Flodden. He was killed, says the curious French Gazette, within a lance's length of the Earl of Surrey; and the same account adds, that none of his division were made prisoners, though many were killed; a circumstance that testifies the desperation of their resistance. The Scottish historians record many of the idle reports which passed among the vulgar of their day. Home was accused, by the popular voice, not only of failing to support the King, but even of having carried him out of the field and murdered him. And this tale was revived in my remembrance, by an unauthenticated story of a skeleton, wrapped in a bull's hide, and surrounded with an iron chain, said to have been found in the well of Home Castle; for which, on inquiry, I could never find any better authority than the sexton of the parish having said that, *if the well were cleaned out, he would not be surprised at such a discovery.* Home was the chamberlain of the King, and his prime favourite; he had much to lose (in fact did lose all) in consequence of James's death, and nothing earthly to gain by that event; but the retreat or inactivity of the left wing which he commanded, after defeating Sir Edmund Howard, and even the circumstance of his returning unhurt, and loaded with spoil, from so fatal a conflict, rendered the propagation of any calumny against him easy and acceptable. Other reports gave a still more romantic turn to the King's fate, and averred that James, weary of greatness, after the carnage among his nobles, had gone on a pilgrimage, to merit absolution for the death of his father, and the breach of his oath of amity to Henry. In particular, it was objected to the English that they could never show the token of the iron belt; which, however, he was likely enough to have laid aside on the day of battle, as encumbering his personal exertions. They produce a better evidence, the monarch's sword and dagger, which are still preserved in the Herald's College in London. Stowe has recorded a degrading story of the disgrace with which the remains of the unfortunate monarch were treated in his time. An unhewn column marks the spot where James fell, still called the King's Stone.

* P. 103.—This storm of Lichfield cathedral, which had been garrisoned on the part of the King, took place in the Great Civil War. Lord Brook, who, with Sir John Gill, commanded the assailants, was shot with a musket-ball through the vizor of his helmet. The royalists remarked, that he was killed by a shot fired from St. Chad's cathedral, and upon St. Chad's Day, and received his death-wound in the very eye with which, he had said, he hoped to see the ruin of all the cathedrals in England. The magnificent church in question suffered cruelly upon this and other occasions; the principal spire being ruined by the fire of the besiegers.

NOTES TO THE LADY OF THE LAKE.

* P. 109.—Ua-Var, as the name is pronounced, or more properly *Uaighmor*, is a mountain to the north-east of the village of Callander in Menteith, deriving its name, which signifies the great den, or cavern, from a sort of retreat among the rocks on the south side, said, by tradition, to have been the abode of a giant. In latter times, it was the refuge of robbers and banditti, who have been only extirpated within these forty or fifty years. Strictly speaking, this stronghold is not a cave, as the name would imply, but a sort of small enclosure, or recess, surrounded with large rocks, and open above head.

* P. 109.—"The hounds which we call Saint Hubert's hounds, are commonly all blacke, yet neuertheless, the race is so mingled at these days, that we find them of all colours. These are the hounds which the abbots of St. Hubert haue always kept some of their race or kind, in honour or remembrance of the saint, which was a hunter with S. Eustace. Whereupon we may conceiue that (by the grace of God) all good huntsmen shall follow them into paradise."—*The Noble Art of Venerie or Hunting, translated and collected for the Use of all Noblemen and Gentlemen.* Lond. 1611. 4to, p. 15.

* P. 109.—When the stag turned to bay, the ancient hunter had the perilous task of going in upon, and killing or disabling the desperate animal. At certain times of the year this was

held particularly dangerous, a wound received from a stag's horn being then deemed poisonous, and more dangerous than one from the tusks of a boar, as the old rhyme testifies—

"If thou be hurt with hart, it brings thee to thy bier,
But barber's hand will boar's hurt heal, therefore thou need'st not fear."

At all times, however, the task was dangerous, and to be adventured upon wisely and warily, either by getting behind the stag while he was gazing upon the hounds, or by watching an opportunity to gallop roundly in upon him, and kill him with the sword.

* P. 110.—Until the present road was made through the romantic pass which I have presumptuously attempted to describe in the preceding stanzas, there was no mode of issuing out of the defile called the Trosachs, excepting by a sort of ladder, composed of the branches and roots of trees.

* P. 111.—The clans who inhabited the romantic regions in the neighbourhood of Loch Katrine, were, even until a late period, much addicted to predatory excursions upon their Lowland neighbours.

* P. 112.—If force of evidence could authorise us to believe facts inconsistent with the general laws of nature, enough might be produced in favour of the existence of the Second-sight. It is called in Gaelic *Taishitaraugh*, from *Taish*, an unreal or shadowy appearance; and those possessed of the faculty are called *Taishatrin*, which may be aptly translated visionaries. Martin, a steady believer in the second-sight, gives the following account of it:—

"The second-sight is a singular faculty of seeing an otherwise invisible object without any previous means used by the person that used it for that end; the vision makes such a lively impression upon the seers, that they neither see nor think of anything else, except the vision, as long as it continues; and then they appear pensive or jovial, according to the object that was represented to them.

"At the sight of a vision, the eyelids of the person are erected, and the eyes continue staring until the object vanish. This is obvious to others who are by when the persons happen to see a vision, and occurred more than once to my own observation, and to others that were with me.

"If a woman is seen standing at a man's left hand, it is a presage that she will be his wife, whether they be married to others, or unmarried at the time of the apparition.

"To see a spark of fire fall upon one's arm or breast, is a forerunner of a dead child to be seen in the arms of those persons; of which there are several fresh instances.

"To see a seat empty at the time of one's sitting in it, is a presage of that person's death soon after." MARTIN'S *Description of the Western Islands*, 1716, 8vo, p. 300, *et seq.*

To these particulars innumerable examples might be added, all attested by grave and credible authors. But, in despite of evidence which neither Bacon, Boyle, nor Johnson were able to resist, the *Taisch*, with all its visionary properties, seems to be now universally abandoned to the use of poetry. The exquisitely beautiful poem of Lochiel will at once occur to the recollection of every reader.

* P. 112.—The Celtic chieftains, whose lives were continually exposed to peril, had usually, in the most retired spot of their domains, some place of retreat for the hour of necessity, which, as circumstances would admit, was a tower, a cavern, or a rustic hut, in a strong and secluded situation. One of these last gave refuge to the unfortunate Charles Edward, in his perilous wanderings after the battle of Culloden.

* P. 113.—These two sons of Anak flourished in romantic fable. The first is well known to the admirers of Ariosto, by the name of Ferrau. He was an antagonist of Orlando, and was at length slain by him in single combat.

Ascapart, or Ascabart, makes a very material figure in the History of Bevis of Hampton, by whom he was conquered. His effigies may be seen guarding one side of a gate at Southampton, while the other is occupied by Sir Bevis himself.

* P. 113.—The Highlanders, who carried hospitality to a punctilious excess, are said to have considered it as churlish to ask a stranger his name or lineage before he had taken refreshment. Feuds were so frequent among them, that a contrary rule would in many cases have produced the discovery of some circumstance which might have excluded the guest from the benefit of the assistance he stood in need of.

* P. 115.—To a late period Highland chieftains retained in their service the bard, as a family officer.

* P. 116.—The ancient and powerful family of Graham (which, for metrical reasons, is here spelt after the Scottish pronounciation) held extensive possessions in the counties of Dumbarton and Stirling. Few families can boast of more historical renown, having claim to three of the most remarkable characters in the Scottish annals. Sir John the Græme, the faithful and undaunted partaker of the labours and patriotic warfare of Wallace, fell in the unfortunate field of Falkirk, 1298. The celebrated Marquis of Montrose, in whom De Retz saw realised his abstract idea of the heroes of antiquity, was the second of these worthies. And, notwithstanding the severity of his temper, and the rigour with which he executed the oppressive mandates of the princes whom he served, I do not hesitate to name as a third, John Græme of Claverhouse, Viscount of Dundee, whose heroic death in the arms of victory may be allowed to cancel the memory of his cruelty to the nonconformists during the reigns of Charles II. and James II.

* P. 116.—I am not prepared to show that Saint Modan was a performer on the harp. It was, however, no unsaintly accomplishment; for Saint Dunstan certainly did play upon that instrument, which retaining, as was natural, a portion of the sanctity attached to its master's character, announced future events by its spontaneous sound.

* P. 116.—The downfall of the Douglasses of the house of Angus during the reign of James V. is the event alluded to in the text.

* P. 117.—This was by no means an uncommon occurrence in the Court of Scotland; nay, the presence of the sovereign himself scarcely restrained the ferocious and inveterate feuds which were the perpetual source of bloodshed among the Scottish nobility. The murder of Sir William Stuart of Ochiltree, called *The Bloody*, by the celebrated Francis, Earl of Bothwell, may be named among many. See JOHNSTONI *Historia Rerum Britannicarum*, ab anno 1572 ad annum 1628. Amstelodami, 1655, fol. p. 135.

* P. 117.—The exiled state of this powerful race is not exaggerated in this and subsequent passages. The hatred of James against the race of Douglas was so inveterate, that numerous as their allies were, and disregarded as the regal authority had usually been in similar cases, their nearest friends, even in the most remote parts of Scotland, durst not entertain them, unless under the strictest and closest disguise.

* P. 117.—The parish of Kilmaronock, at the eastern extremity of Loch Lomond, derives its name from a cell or chapel, dedicated to St. Maronock, or Marnock, or Maronnan, about whose sanctity very little is now remembered. There is a fountain devoted to him in the same parish; but its virtues, like the merits of its patron, have fallen into oblivion.

* P. 117.—This is a beautiful cascade made by a mountain stream called the Keltie, at a place called the Bridge of Bracklinn, about a mile from the village of Callander in Menteith.

* P. 117.—Archibald, the third Earl of Douglas, was so unfortunate in all his enterprises, that he acquired the epithet of TINEMAN, because he *tined*, or lost, his followers in every battle which he fought.

* P. 118.—The ancient warriors, whose hope and confidence rested chiefly in their blades, were accustomed to deduce omens from them, especially from such as were supposed to have been fabricated by enchanted skill, of which we have various instances in the romances and legends of the time.

* P. 118.—The connoisseurs in pipe-music affect to discover, in a well-composed pibroch, the imitative sounds of march, conflict, flight, pursuit, and all the "current of a heady fight."

* P. 118.—Besides his ordinary name and surname, which were chiefly used in the intercourse with the Lowlands, every Highland chief had an epithet expressive of his patriarchal dignity as head of the clan, and which was common to all his predecessors and successors, as Pharaoh to the kings of Egypt, or Arsaces to those of Parthia. This name was usually a patronymic, expressive of his descent from the founder of the family. Thus the Duke of Argyle is called MacCallum More, or the *son of Colin the Great*.

* P. 123.—When a chieftain designed to summon his clan, upon any sudden or important emergency, he slew a goat, and making a cross of any light wood, seared its extremities in the fire, and extinguished them in the blood of the animal. This was called the *Fiery Cross*, also *Crean Tarigh*, or the *Cross of Shame*, because disobedience to what the symbol implied inferred infamy. It was delivered to a swift and trusty messenger, who ran full speed with it to the next hamlet, where he presented it to the principal person, with a single word, implying the place of rendezvous. He who received the symbol was bound to send it forward, with equal despatch, to the next village; and thus it passed with incredible celerity through all the district which owed allegiance to the chief, and also among his allies and neighbours, if the danger was common to them. At sight of the Fiery Cross, every man, from sixteen years old to sixty, capable of bearing arms, was obliged instantly to repair, in his best arms and accoutrements, to the place of rendezvous. He who failed to appear, suffered the extremities of fire and sword, which were emblematically denounced to the disobedient by the bloody and burnt marks upon this warlike signal. During the civil war of 1745–6, the Fiery Cross often made its circuit; and upon one occasion it passed through the whole district of Breadalbane, a tract of thirty-two miles, in three hours.

* P. 123.—The state of religion in the middle ages afforded considerable facilities for those whose mode of life excluded them from regular worship, to secure, nevertheless, the ghostly assistance of confessors, perfectly willing to adapt the nature of their doctrine to the necessities and peculiar circumstances of their flock. Robin Hood, it is well known, had his celebrated domestic chaplain, Friar Tuck.

* P. 124.—The legend which follows is not of the author's invention. It is possible he may differ from modern critics, in supposing that the records of human superstition, if peculiar to, and characteristic of, the country in which the scene is laid, are a legitimate subject of poetry. He gives, however, a ready assent to the narrower proposition which condemns all attempts of an irregular and disordered fancy to excite terror, by accumulating a train of fantastic and incoherent horrors, whether borrowed from all countries, and patched upon a narrative belonging to one which knew them not, or derived from the author's own imagination. In the present case, therefore, I appeal to the record which I have transcribed, with the variation of a very few words, from the geographical collections made by the Laird of Macfarlane. I know not whether it be necessary to remark, that the miscellaneous concourse of youths and maidens on the night and on the spot where the miracle is said to have taken place, might, even in a credulous age, have somewhat diminished the wonder which accompanied the conception of Gilli-Doir-Magrevollich.

"There is bot two myles from Inverloghie, the church of Kilmalee, in Lochyeld. In ancient tymes there was ane church builded upon ane hill, which was above this church, which doeth now stand in this toune; and ancient men doeth say, that there was a battell foughten on ane litle hill not the tenth part of a myle from this church, be certaine men which they did not

know what they were. And long tyme thereafter, certaine herds of that toune, and of the next toune, called Unnatt, both wenches and youthes, did on a tyme conveen with others on that hill; and the day being somewhat cold, did gather the bones of the dead men that were slayne long tyme before in that place, and did make a fire to warm them. At last they did all remove from the fire, except one maid or wench, which was verie cold, and she did remaine there for a space. She being quyetlie her alone, without anie other companie, took up her cloaths above her knees, or thereby, to warm her; a wind did come and cast the ashes upon her, and she was conceived of ane man-chyld. Severall tymes thereafter she was verie sick, and at last she was knowne to be with chyld. And then her parents did ask at her the matter heiroff, which the wench could not weel answer which way to satisfie them. At last she resolved them with ane answer. As fortune fell upon her concerning this marvellous miracle, the chyld being borne, his name was called *Gili-doir Maghrevollick*, that is to say, the *Black Child, Son to the Bones*. So called, his grandfather sent him to school, and so he was a good schollar, and godlie. He did build this church which doeth now stand in Lochyeld, called Kilmalie."—MACFARLANE, *ut supra*, ii. 188.

* P. 124.—The *snood*, or riband, with which a Scottish lass braided her hair, had an emblematical signification, and applied to her maiden character. It was exchanged for the *curch*, *toy*, or coif, when she passed, by marriage, into the matron state. But if the damsel was so unfortunate as to lose pretensions to the name of maiden, without gaining a right to that of matron, she was neither permitted to use the snood, nor advanced to the graver dignity of the curch. In old Scottish songs there occur many sly allusions to such misfortune; as in the old words to the popular tune of "Ower the muir amang the heather."

" Down amang the broom, the broom,
Down amang the broom, my dearie,
The lassie lost her silken snood,
That gard her greet till she was wearie."

* P. 124.—Most great families in the Highlands were supposed to have a tutelar, or rather a domestic spirit, attached to them, who took an interest in their prosperity, and intimated, by its wailings, any approaching disaster. A superstition of the same kind is, I believe, universally received by the inferior ranks of the native Irish.

* P. 124.—A presage of the kind alluded to in the text, is still believed to announce death to the ancient Highland family of M'Lean of Lochbuy. The spirit of an ancestor slain in battle is heard to gallop along a stony bank, and then to ride thrice around the family residence, ringing his fairy bridle, and thus intimating the approaching calamity.

* P. 125.—The present *brogue* of the Highlanders is made of half-dried leather, with holes to admit and let out the water; for walking the moors dry-shod is a matter altogether out of the question. The ancient buskin was still ruder, being made of undressed deer's hide, with the hair outwards; a circumstance which procured the Highlanders the well-known epithet of *Red-shanks*.

* P. 126.—The *Coronach* of the Highlanders, like the *Ulalatus* of the Romans, and the *Ululoo* of the Irish, was a wild expression of lamentation, poured forth by the mourners over the body of a departed friend. When the words of it were articulate, they expressed the praises of the deceased, and the loss the clan would sustain by his death.

* P. 128.—It may be necessary to inform the southern reader, that the heath on the Scottish moorlands is often set fire to, that the sheep may have the advantage of the young herbage produced, in room of the tough old heather plants. This custom (execrated by sportsmen) produces occasionally the most beautiful nocturnal appearances, similar almost to the discharge of a volcano. This simile is not new to poetry. The charge of a warrior, in the fine ballad of Hardyknute, is said to be "like fire to heather set."

* P. 128.—This is a very steep and most romantic hollow in the mountain of Benvenue, overhanging the south-eastern extremity of Loch Katrine. It is surrounded with stupendous rocks, and overshadowed with birch-trees, mingled with oaks, the spontaneous production of the mountain, even where its cliffs appear denuded of soil.

* P. 130.—The Highlanders, like all rude people, had various superstitious modes of inquiring into futurity. One of the most noted was the *Taghairm*, mentioned in the text. A person was wrapped up in the skin of a newly-slain bullock, and deposited beside a waterfall, or at the bottom of a precipice, or in some other strange, wild, and unusual situation, where the scenery around him suggested nothing but objects of horror. In this situation, he revolved in his mind the question proposed; and whatever was impressed upon him by his exalted imagination, passed for the inspiration of the disembodied spirits, who haunt the desolate recesses.

* P. 131.—There is a rock so named in the Forest of Glenfinlas, by which a tumultuary cataract takes its course. This wild place is said in former times to have afforded refuge to an outlaw, who was supplied with provisions by a woman, who lowered them down from the brink of the precipice above. His water he procured for himself, by letting down a flagon, tied to a string, into the black pool beneath the fall.

* P. 131.—Though this be in the text described as a response of the Taghairm, or Oracle of the Hide, it was of itself an augury frequently attended to. The fate of the battle was often anticipated in the imagination of the combatants, by observing which party first shed blood. It is said that the Highlanders under Montrose were so deeply imbued with this notion, that ,on the morning of the battle of Tippermoor, they murdered a defenceless herdsman, whom they found in the fields, merely to secure an advantage of so much consequence to their party.

* P. 133.—Fairies, if not positively malevolent, are capricious, and easily offended. Like other proprietors of forests, they are peculiarly jealous of their rights of *vert* and *venison*. This jealousy was also an attribute of the northern *Duergar*, or dwarfs; to many of whose distinctions the fairies seem to have succeeded, if, indeed, they are not the same class of beings.

* P. 133.—As the *Daoine Shi'*, or Men of Peace, wore green habits, they were supposed to take offence when any mortals ventured to assume their favourite colour. Indeed, from some reason which has been, perhaps, originally a general superstition, *green* is held in Scotland to be unlucky to particular tribes and counties. The Caithness men, who hold this belief, allege as a reason, that their bands wore that colour when they were cut off at the battle of Flodden; and for the same reason they avoid crossing the Ord on a Monday, being the day of the week on which their ill-omened array set forth. Green is also disliked by those of the name of Ogilvy; but more especially is it held fatal to the whole clan of Grahame. It is remembered of an aged gentleman of that name, that when his horse fell in a fox-chase, he accounted for it at once by observing that the whipcord attached to his lash was of this unlucky colour.

* P. 133.—The elves were supposed greatly to envy the privileges acquired by Christian initiation, and they gave to those mortals who had fallen into their power a certain precedence, founded upon this advantageous distinction. Tamlane, in the old ballad, describes his own rank in the fairy procession:—

> "For I ride on a milk-white steed,
> And aye nearest the town;
> Because I was a christen'd knight,
> They gave me that renown."

* P. 137.—St. John actually used this illustration when engaged in confuting the plea of law proposed for the unfortunate Earl of Strafford: "It was true we gave laws to hares and deer, because they are beasts of chase; but it was never accounted either cruelty or foul play to knock foxes or wolves on the head as they can be found, because they are beasts of prey. In a word, the law and humanity were alike; the one being more fallacious, and the other more barbarous, than in any age had been vented in such an authority."—CLARENDON'S *History of the Rebellion*." Oxford, 1702, fol. vol. p. 183.

* P. 137.—The Scottish Highlanders, in former times, had a concise mode of cooking their venison, or rather of dispensing with cooking it, which appears greatly to have surprised the French whom chance made acquainted with it. The Vidame of Charters, when a hostage in England, during the reign of Edward VI., was permitted to travel into Scotland, and penetrated as far as to the remote Highlands (*au fin fond des Sauvages*). After a great hunting party, at which a most wonderful quantity of game was destroyed, he saw these *Scottish Savages* devour a part of their venison raw, without any farther preparation than compressing it between two batons of wood, so as to force out the blood, and render it extremely hard. This they reckoned a great delicacy; and when the Vidame partook of it, his compliance with their taste rendered him extremely popular.

* P. 138.—There is scarcely a more disorderly period in Scottish history than that which succeeded the battle of Flodden, and occupied the minority of James V. Feuds of ancient standing broke out like old wounds, and every quarrel among the independent nobility, which occurred daily, and almost hourly, gave rise to fresh bloodshed.

* P. 140.—This incident, like some other passages in the poem, illustrative of the character of the ancient Gael, is not imaginary, but borrowed from fact. The Highlanders, with the inconsistency of most nations in the same state, were alternately capable of great exertions of generosity, and of cruel revenge and perfidy.

* P. 140.—The torrent which discharges itself from Loch Vennachar, the lowest and eastmost of the three lakes which form the scenery adjoining to the Trosachs, sweeps through a flat and extensive moor, called Bochastle. Upon a small eminence, called the *Dun* of Bochastle, and indeed on the plain itself, are some intrenchments, which have been thought Roman. There is, adjacent to Callander, a sweet villa, the residence of Captain Fairfoul, entitled the Roman Camp.

* P. 140.—The duellists of former times did not always stand upon those punctilios respecting equality of arms, which are now judged essential to fair combat. It is true, that in former combats in the lists, the parties were, by the judges of the field, put as nearly as possible in the same circumstances. But in private duel it was often otherwise.

* P. 141.—A round target of light wood, covered with strong leather, and studded with brass or iron, was a necessary part of a Highlander's equipment. In charging regular troops, they received the thrust of the bayonet in this buckler, twisted it aside, and used the broadsword against the encumbered soldier. In the civil war of 1745, most of the front rank of the clans were thus armed; and Captain Grose informs us, that, in 1747, the privates of the 42nd regiment, then in Flanders, were, for the most part, permitted to carry targets.—*Military Antiquities*, vol. i. p. 164.

* P. 142.—Every burgh of Scotland, of the least note, but more especially the considerable towns, had their solemn *play*, or festival, when feats of archery were exhibited, and prizes distributed to those who excelled in wrestling, hurling the bar, and the other gymnastic exercises of the period. Stirling, a usual place of royal residence, was not likely to be deficient in pomp upon such occasions, especially since James V. was very partial to them. His ready participation in these popular amusements was one cause of his acquiring the title of King of the Commons, or *Rex Plebeiorum*, as Leslie has Latinised it. The usual prize to the best shooter was a silver arrow. Such a one is preserved at Selkirk and at Peebles.

* P. 143.—The exhibition of this renowned outlaw and his band was a favourite frolic at such festivals as we are describing. This sporting, in which kings did not disdain to be actors, was prohibited in Scotland upon the Reformation, by a statute of the 6th Parliament of Queen Mary, c. 61, A.D. 1555, which ordered, under heavy penalties, that "na manner of person be chosen Robert Hude, nor Little John, Abbot of Unreason, Queen of May, nor otherwise." But in 1561, the "rascal multitude," says John Knox, "were stirred up to make a Robin Hude, whilk enormity was of many years left and damned by statute and Act of Parliament; yet would they not be forbidden." Accordingly, they raised a very serious tumult, and at length made prisoners the magistrates who endeavoured to suppress it, and would not release them till they extorted a formal promise that no one should be punished for his share of the disturbance. It would seem, from the complaints of the General Assembly of the Kirk, that these profane festivities were continued down to 1592.

* P. 143.—The usual prize of a wrestling was a ram and a ring, but the animal would have embarrassed my story. Thus, in the Cokes Tale of Gamelyn, ascribed to Chaucer:

"There happed to be there beside
Tryed a wrestling:
And therefore there was y-setten
A ram and als a ring."

* P. 146.—The Scottish armies consisted chiefly of the nobility and barons, with their vassals, who held lands under them, for military service by themselves and their tenants. The patriarchal influence exercised by the heads of clans in the Highlands and Borders was of a different nature, and sometimes at variance with feudal principles. It flowed from the *Patria Potestas*, exercised by the chieftain as representing the original father of the whole name, and was often obeyed in contradiction to the feudal superior.

* P. 147.—The jongleurs, or jugglers, used to call in the aid of various assistants, to render these performances as captivating as possible. The glee-maiden was a necessary attendant. Her duty was tumbling and dancing; and therefore the Anglo-Saxon version of Saint Mark's Gospel states Herodias to have vaulted or tumbled before King Herod.

* P. 149.—There are several instances, at least in tradition, of persons so much attached to particular tunes as to require to hear them on their death-bed. Such an anecdote is mentioned by the late Mr. Riddel of Glenriddel, in his collection of Border tunes, respecting an air called the "Dandling of the Bairns," for which a certain Gallovidian laird is said to have evinced this strong mark of partiality. It is popularly told of a famous freebooter, that he composed the tune known by the name of Macpherson's Rant while under sentence of death, and played it at the gallows-tree. Some spirited words have been adapted to it by Burns. A similar story is recounted of a Welsh bard, who composed and played on his death-bed the air called *Dafyddy Garregg Wen*.

* P. 149.—A skirmish actually took place at a pass thus named in the Trosachs, and closed with the remarkable incident mentioned in the text. It was greatly posterior in date to the reign of James V.

* P. 152.—This discovery will probably remind the reader of the beautiful Arabian tale of *Il Bondocani*. Yet the incident is not borrowed from that elegant story, but from Scottish tradition. James V., of whom we are treating, was a monarch whose good and benevolent intentions often rendered his romantic freaks venial, if not respectable, since, from his anxious attention to the interests of the lower and most oppressed class of his subjects, he was, as we have seen, popularly termed the *King of the Commons*. For the purpose of seeing that justice was regularly administered, and frequently from the less justifiable motive of gallantry, he used to traverse the vicinage of his several palaces in various disguises. The two excellent comic songs, entitled, "The Gaberlunzie Man," and "We 'll gae nae mair a roving," are said to have been founded upon the success of his amorous adventures when travelling in the disguise of a beggar. The latter is perhaps the best comic ballad in any language.

* P. 153.—William of Worcester, who wrote about the middle of the fifteenth century, calls Stirling Castle Snowdoun. Sir David Lindsay bestows the same epithet upon it in his complaint of the Papingo:—

"Adieu, fair Snawdoun, with thy towers high,
Thy chaple-royal, park, and table round;
May, June, and July, would I dwell in thee,
Were I a man, to hear the birdis sound,
Whilk doth againe thy royal rock rebound."

NOTES TO THE VISION OF DON RODERICK.

* P. 155.—This locality may startle those readers who do not recollect that much of the ancient poetry preserved in Wales refers less to the history of the Principality to which that name is now limited, than to events which happened in the north-west of England and south-west of Scotland, where the Britons for a long time made a stand against the Saxons. The battle of Cattraeth, lamented by the celebrated Aneurin, is supposed, by the learned Dr. Leyden, to have been fought on the skirts of Ettrick Forest. It is known to the English reader by the paraphrase of Gray, beginning,

"Had I but the torrent's might
With headlong rage and wild affright," &c.

* P. 156.—A belief in the existence and nocturnal revels of the fairies still lingers among

the vulgar in Selkirkshire. A copious fountain upon the ridge of Minchmore, called the Cheese-well, is supposed to be sacred to these fanciful spirits, and it was customary to propitiate them by throwing in something upon passing it. A pin was the usual oblation; and the ceremony is still sometimes practised, though rather in jest than earnest.

* P. 156.—The flexibility of the Italian and Spanish languages, and perhaps the liveliness of their genius, renders these countries distinguished for the talent of improvisation, which is found even among the lowest of the people. It is mentioned by Baretti and other travellers.

* P. 156.—I have used the freedom, here and elsewhere, to alter the orthography of the name of my gallant countryman, in order to apprise the Southern reader of its legitimate sound;—Grahame being, on the other side of the Tweed, usually pronounced as a dissyllable.

* P. 157.—Almost all the Spanish historians, as well as the voice of tradition, ascribe the invasion of the Moors to the forcible violation committed by Roderick upon Florinda, called by the Moors, Caba or Cava. She was the daughter of Count Julian, one of the Gothic monarch's principal lieutenants, who, when the crime was perpetrated, was engaged in the defence of Ceuta against the Moors. In his indignation at the ingratitude of his sovereign, and the dishonour of his daughter, Count Julian forgot the duties of a Christian and a patriot, and, forming an alliance with Musa, then the Caliph's lieutenant in Africa, he countenanced the invasion of Spain by a body of Saracens and Africans, commanded by the celebrated Tarik; the issue of which was the defeat and death of Roderick, and the occupation of almost the whole peninsula by the Moors.

* P. 158.—The Tecbir (derived from the words *Alla acbar*, God is most mighty) was the original war-cry of the Saracens. It is celebrated by Hughes in the Siege of Damascus:—

> "We heard the Tecbir; so these Arabs call
> Their shout of onset, when, with loud appeal,
> They challenge Heaven, as if demanding conquest."

The *Lelie*, well known to the Christians during the crusades, is the shout of *Alla illa Alla*, the Mahommedan confession of faith. It is twice used in poetry by my friend Mr. W. Stewart Rose, in the romance of Partenopex, and in the Crusade of St. Lewis.

* P. 159.—Count Julian, the father of the injured Florinda, with the connivance and assistance of Oppas, Archbishop of Toledo, invited, in 713, the Saracens into Spain. A considerable army arrived under the command of Tarik, or Tarif, who bequeathed the well-known name of Gibraltar (*Gibel al Tarik*, or the mountain of Tarik) to the place of his landing. He was joined by Count Julian, ravaged Andalusia, and took Seville. In 714, they returned with a still greater force, and Roderick marched into Andalusia at the head of a great army, to give them battle. The field was chosen near Xeres.

* P. 160.—The bolero is a very light and active dance, much practised by the Spaniards, in which castanets are always used. *Mozo* and *muchacha* are equivalent to our phrase of lad and lass.

* P. 161.—The heralds, at the coronation of a Spanish monarch, proclaim his name three times, and repeat three times the word, *Castilia, Castilia, Castilia!* which, with all other ceremonies, was carefully copied in the mock inauguration of Joseph Bonaparte.

* P. 162.—Those who were disposed to believe that mere virtue and energy are able of themselves to work forth the salvation of an oppressed people, surprised in a moment of confidence, deprived of their officers, armies, and fortresses, who had every means of resistance to seek in the very moment when they were to be made use of, and whom the numerous treasons among the higher orders deprived of confidence in their natural leaders,—those who entertained this enthusiastic but delusive opinion may be pardoned for expressing their disappointment at the protracted warfare in the Peninsula. There are, however, another class of persons, who, having themselves the highest dread or veneration, or something allied to both, for the power of the modern Attila, will nevertheless give the heroical Spaniards little or no credit for the long, stubborn, and unsubdued resistance of three years to a power before whom their former well-prepared, well-armed, and numerous adversaries fell in the course of as many months. While these gentlemen plead for deference to Bonaparte, and crave

> "Respect for his great place, and bid the devil
> Be duly honoured for his burning throne,"

it may not be altogether unreasonable to claim some modification of censure upon those who have been long and to a great extent successfully resisting this great enemy of mankind. That the energy of Spain has not uniformly been directed by conduct equal to its vigour, has been too obvious; that her armies, under their complicated disadvantages, have shared the fate of such as were defeated after taking the field with every possible advantage of arms and discipline, is surely not to be wondered at. But that a nation, under the circumstances of repeated discomfiture, internal treason, and the mismanagement incident to a temporary and hastily adopted government, should have wasted, by its stubborn, uniform, and prolonged resistance, myriads after myriads of those soldiers who had overrun the world—that some of its provinces should, like Galicia, after being abandoned by their allies, and overrun by their enemies, have recovered their freedom by their own unassisted exertions; that others, like Catalonia, undismayed by the treason which betrayed some fortresses, and the force which subdued others, should not only have continued their resistance, but have attained over their victorious enemy a superiority, which is even now enabling them to besiege and retake the places of strength which had been wrested from them, is a tale hitherto untold in the revolutionary war. To say that such a people cannot be subdued, would be presumption similar to that of those who

protested that Spain could not defend herself for a year, or Portugal for a month; but that a resistance which has been continued for so long a space, when the usurper, except during the short-lived Austrian campaign, had no other enemies on the Continent, should be now less successful, when repeated defeats have broken the reputation of the French armies, and when they are likely (it would seem almost in desperation) to seek occupation elsewhere, is a prophecy as improbable as ungracious.

* P. 162.—The interesting account of Mr. Vaughan has made most readers acquainted with the first siege of Zaragoza.† The last and fatal siege of that gallant and devoted city is detailed with great eloquence and precision in the *Edinburgh Annual Register* for 1809—a work in which the affairs of Spain have been treated of with attention corresponding to their deep interest, and to the peculiar sources of information open to the historian. The following are a few brief extracts from this splendid historical narrative:—

"A breach was soon made in the mud walls, and then, as in the former siege, the war was carried on in the streets and houses; but the French had been taught by experience, that in this species of warfare the Zaragozans derived a superiority from the feeling and principle which inspired them, and the cause for which they fought. The only means of conquering Zaragoza was to destroy it house by house, and street by street; and upon this system of destruction they proceeded. Three companies of miners, and eight companies of sappers, carried on this subterraneous war; the Spaniards, it is said, attempted to oppose them by countermines; these were operations to which they were wholly unused, and, according to the French statement, their miners were every day discovered and suffocated. Meantime, the bombardment was incessantly kept up. 'Within the last forty-eight hours,' said Palafox in a letter to his friend General Doyle, '6,000 shells have been thrown in. Two-thirds of the town are in ruins, but we shall perish under the ruins of the remaining third rather than surrender.' In the course of the siege, above 17,000 bombs were thrown at the town; the stock of powder with which Zaragoza had been stored was exhausted; they had none at last but what they manufactured day by day; and no other cannon-balls than those which were shot into the town, and which they collected and fired back upon the enemy."——

In the midst of these horrors and privations, the pestilence broke out in Zaragoza. To various causes, enumerated by the annalist, he adds, "scantiness of food, crowded quarters, unusual exertion of body, anxiety of mind, and the impossibility of recruiting their exhausted strength by needful rest, in a city which was almost incessantly bombarded, and where every hour their sleep was broken by the tremendous explosion of mines. There was now no respite, either by day or night, for this devoted city; even the natural order of light and darkness were destroyed in Zaragoza; by day it was involved in a red sulphureous atmosphere of smoke, which hid the face of heaven; by night, the fire of cannons and mortars, and the flames of burning houses, kept it in a state of terrific illumination.

"When once the pestilence had begun, it was impossible to check its progress, or confine it to one quarter of the city. Hospitals were immediately established,—there were above thirty of them; as soon as one was destroyed by the bombardment, the patients were removed to another, and thus the infection was carried to every part of Zaragoza. Famine aggravated the evil; the city had probably not been sufficiently provided at the commencement of the siege, and of the provisions which it contained, much was destroyed in the daily ruin which the mines and bombs had effected. Had the Zaragozans and their garrison proceeded according to military rules, they would have surrendered before the end of January: their batteries had then been demolished, there were open breaches in many parts of their weak walls, and the enemy were already within the city. On the 30th, above sixty houses were blown up, and the French obtained possession of the monasteries of the Augustines and Las Monicas, which adjoined each other, two of the last defensible places left. The enemy forced their way into the church; every column, every chapel, every altar, became a point of defence, which was repeatedly attacked, taken, and retaken; the pavement was covered with blood, the aisles and body of the church strewed with the dead, who were trampled under foot by the combatants. In the midst of this conflict, the roof, shattered by repeated bombs, fell in; the few who were not crushed, after a short pause, which this tremendous shock, and their own unexpected escape, occasioned, renewed the fight with rekindled fury; fresh parties of the enemy poured in; monks, and citizens, and soldiers came to the defence, and the contest was continued upon the ruins, and the bodies of the dead and the dying."——

Yet, seventeen days after sustaining these extremities, did the heroic inhabitants of Zaragoza continue their defence; nor did they then surrender until their despair had extracted from the French generals a capitulation, more honourable than has been granted to fortresses of the first order.

Who shall venture to refuse the Zaragozans the eulogium conferred upon them by the eloquence of Wordsworth:—"Most gloriously have the citizens of Zaragoza proved that the true army of Spain, in a contest of this nature, is the whole people. The same city has also exemplified a melancholy, yea, a dismal truth,—yet consolatory and full of joy,—that when a people are called suddenly to fight for their liberty, and are sorely pressed upon, their best field of battle is the floors upon which their children have played; the chambers where the family of each man has slept (his own or his neighbours'); upon or under the roofs by which they have been sheltered; in the gardens of

† See Narrative of the Siege of Zaragoza, by Richard Charles Vaughan, Esq., 1809. The Right Honourable R. C. Vaughan is now British Minister at Washington, 1833.

their recreation; in the street, or in the market-place; before the altars of their temples, and among their congregated dwellings, blazing or uprooted.

"The government of Spain must never forget Zaragoza for a moment. Nothing is wanting to produce the same effects everywhere, but a leading mind, such as that city was blessed with. In the latter contest this has been proved; for Zaragoza contained, at that time, bodies of men from almost all parts of Spain. The narrative of these two sieges should be the manual of every Spaniard. He may add to it the ancient stories of Numantia and Saguntum; let him sleep upon the book as a pillow, and, if he be a devout adherent to the religion of his country, let him wear it in his bosom for his crucifix to rest upon."—WORDSWORTH *on the Convention of Cintra.*

* P. 164.—Before finally dismissing the enchanted cavern of Don Roderick, it may be noticed that the legend occurs in one of Calderon's plays, entitled *La Virgin del Sagrario.* The scene opens with the noise of the chase, and Recisundo, a predecessor of Roderick upon the Gothic throne, enters pursuing a stag. The animal assumes the form of a man, and defies the king to enter the cave, which forms the bottom of the scene, and engage with him in single combat. The king accepts the challenge, and they engage accordingly, but without advantage on either side, which induces the Genie to inform Recisundo, that he is not the monarch for whom the adventure of the enchanted cavern is reserved, and he proceeds to predict the downfall of the Gothic monarchy, and of the Christian religion, which shall attend the discovery of its mysteries. Recisundo, appalled by these prophecies, orders the cavern to be secured by a gate and bolts of iron. In the second part of the same play, we are informed that Don Roderick had removed the barrier, and transgressed the prohibition of his ancestor, and had been apprised by the prodigies which he discovered of the approaching ruin of his kingdom.

* P. 164.—I have ventured to apply to the movements of the French army that sublime passage in the prophecies of Joel, which seems applicable to them in more respects than that I have adopted in the text. One would think their ravages, their military appointments, the terror which they spread among invaded nations, their military discipline, their arts of political intrigue and deceit, were distinctly pointed out in the following verses of Scripture:—

"2. A day of darknesse and of gloominesse, a day of clouds and of thick darknesse, as the morning spread upon the mountains: a great people and a strong; there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, even to the yeares of many generations. 3. A fire devoureth before them; and behind them a flame burneth: the land is as the garden of Eden before them, and behinde them a desolate wilderness; yea, and nothing shall escape them. 4. The appearance of them is as the appearance of horses; and as horsemen, so shall they runne. 5. Like the noise of charlots on the tops of mountains shall they leap, like the noise of a flame of fire that devoureth the stubble, as a strong people set in battel array. 6. Before their face the people shall be much pained; all faces shall gather blacknesse. 7. They shall run like mighty men; they shall climb the wall like men of warre; and they shall march every one on his wayes, and they shall not break their ranks. 8. Neither shall one thrust another; they shall walk every one in his path; and when they fall upon the sword, they shall not be wounded. 9. They shall run to and fro in the citie; they shall run upon the wall, they shall climbe up upon the houses: they shall enter in at the windows like a thief. 10. The earth shall quake before them; the heavens shall tremble: the sunne and the moon shall be dark, and the starres shall withdraw their shining."

In verse 20th also, which announces the retreat of the northern army, described in such dreadful colours, into a "land barren and desolate," and the dishonour with which God afflicted them for having "magnified themselves to do great things," there are particulars not inapplicable to the retreat of Massena:—Divine Providence having, in all ages, attached disgrace as the natural punishment of cruelty and presumption.

* P. 165.—Even the unexampled gallantry of the British army in the campaign of 1810–11, although they never fought but to conquer, will do them less honour in history than their humanity, attentive to soften to the utmost of their power the horrors which war, in its mildest aspect, must always inflict upon the defenceless inhabitants of the country in which it is waged, and which, on this occasion, were tenfold augmented by the barbarous cruelties of the French. Soup-kitchens were established by subscription among the officers, wherever the troops were quartered for any length of time. The commissaries contributed the heads, feet, &c., of the cattle slaughtered for the soldiery; rice, vegetables, and bread, where it could be had, were purchased by the officers. Fifty or sixty starving peasants were daily fed at one of these regimental establishments, and carried home the relics to their famished households. The emaciated wretches, who could not crawl from weakness, were speedily employed in pruning their vines. While pursuing Massena, the soldiers evinced the same spirit of humanity. Is it possible to know such facts without feeling a sort of confidence, that those who so well deserve victory are most likely to attain it?—It is not the least of Lord Wellington's military merits, that the slightest disposition towards marauding meets immediate punishment. Independently of all moral obligation, the army which is most orderly in a friendly country, has always proved most formidable to an armed enemy.

* P. 165.—The French conducted this memorable retreat with much of the *fanfaronnade* proper to their country, by which they attempt to impose upon others, and perhaps on themselves, a belief that they are triumphing in the very moment of their discomfiture. On the 30th March, 1811, their rear-guard was overtaken near Pega by the British cavalry. Being

well posted, and conceiving themselves safe from infantry (who were indeed many miles in the rear), and from artillery, they indulged themselves in parading their bands of music, and actually performed "God save the King." Their minstrelsy was, however, deranged by the undesired accompaniment of the British horse-artillery, on whose part in the concert they had not calculated. The surprise was sudden, and the rout complete; for the artillery and cavalry did execution upon them for about four miles, pursuing at the gallop as often as they got beyond the range of the guns.

* P. 165.—In the severe action of Fuentes d'Honoro, upon 5th May, 1811, the grand mass of the French cavalry attacked the right of the British position, covered by two guns of the horse-artillery, and two squadrons of cavalry. After suffering considerably from the fire of the guns, which annoyed them in every attempt at formation, the enemy turned their wrath entirely towards them, distributed brandy among their troopers, and advanced to carry the field-pieces with the desperation of drunken fury. They were in no wise checked by the heavy loss which they sustained in this daring attempt, but closed, and fairly mingled with the British cavalry, to whom they bore the proportion of ten to one. Captain Ramsay (let me be permitted to name a gallant countryman), who commanded the two guns, dismissed them at the gallop, and putting himself at the head of the mounted artillerymen, ordered them to fall upon the French, sabre-in-hand. This very unexpected conversion of artillerymen into dragoons contributed greatly to the defeat of the enemy, already disconcerted by the reception they had met from the two British squadrons; and the appearance of some small reinforcements, notwithstanding the immense disproportion of force, put them to absolute rout. A colonel or major of their cavalry, and many prisoners (almost all intoxicated), remained in our possession. Those who consider for the moment the difference of the services, and how much an artilleryman is necessarily and naturally led to identify his own safety and utility with abiding by the tremendous implement of war, to the exercise of which he is chiefly, if not exclusively, trained, will know how to estimate the presence of mind which commanded so bold a manœuvre, and the steadiness and confidence with which it was executed.

* P. 165.—The gallant Colonel Cameron was wounded mortally during the desperate contest in the streets of the village called Fuentes d'Honoro. He fell at the head of his native Highlanders, the 71st and 79th, who raised a dreadful shriek of grief and rage. They charged, with irresistible fury, the finest body of French grenadiers ever seen, being a part of Bonaparte's selected guard. The officer who led the French, a man remarkable for stature and symmetry, was killed on the spot. The Frenchman who stepped out of his rank to take aim at Colonel Cameron was also bayoneted, pierced with a thousand wounds, and almost torn to pieces by the furious Highlanders, who, under the command of Colonel Cadogan, bore the enemy out of the contested ground at the point of the bayonet. Massena pays my countrymen a singular compliment in his account of the attack and defence of this village, in which he says the British lost many officers, *and Scotch*.

* P. 166.—Nothing during the war of Portugal seems, to a distinct observer, more deserving of praise than the self-devotion of Field-Marshal Beresford, who was contented to undertake all the hazard of obloquy which might have been founded upon any miscarriage in the highly important experiment of training the Portuguese troops to an improved state of discipline. In exposing his military reputation to the censure of imprudence from the most moderate, and all manner of unutterable calumnies from the ignorant and malignant, he placed at stake the dearest pledge which a military man had to offer, and nothing but the deepest conviction of the high and essential importance attached to success can be supposed an adequate motive. How great the chance of miscarriage was supposed, may be estimated from the general opinion of officers of unquestioned talents and experience, possessed of every opportunity of information; how completely the experiment has succeeded, and how much the spirit and patriotism of our ancient allies had been underrated, is evident, not only from those victories in which they have borne a distinguished share, but from the liberal and highly honourable manner in which these opinions have been retracted. The success of this plan, with all its important consequences, we owe to the indefatigable exertions of Field-Marshal Beresford.

* P. 166.—This stanza alludes to the various achievements of the warlike family of Græme, or Grahame. They are said, by tradition, to have descended from the Scottish chief, under whose command his countrymen stormed the wall built by the Emperor Severus between the Friths of Forth and Clyde, the fragments of which are still popularly called Græme's Dyke. Sir John the Græme, "the hardy, wight, and wise," is well known as the friend of Sir William Wallace. Alderne, Kilsythe, and Tibbermuir, were scenes of the victories of the heroic Marquis of Montrose. The pass of Killycrankie is famous for the action between King William's forces and the Highlanders in 1689.

"Where glad Dundee in faint huzzas expired."

It is seldom that one line can number so many heroes, and yet more rare when it can appeal to the glory of a living descendant in support of its ancient renown.

The allusions to the private history and character of General Grahame may be illustrated by referring to the eloquent and affecting speech of Mr. Sheridan, upon the vote of thanks to the Victors of Barossa.

NOTES TO ROKEBY.

* P. 170. — "Barnard Castle," saith old Leland, "standeth stately upon Tees." It is founded upon a very high bank, and its ruins impend over the river, including within the area a circuit of six acres and upwards. This once magnificent fortress derives its name from its founder, Barnard Baliol, the ancestor of the short and unfortunate dynasty of that name, which succeeded to the Scottish throne under the patronage of Edward I. and Edward III. Baliol's Tower, afterwards mentioned in the poem, is a round tower of great size, situated at the western extremity of the building. It bears marks of great antiquity, and was remarkable for the curious construction of its vaulted roof, which has been lately greatly injured by the operations of some persons, to whom the tower has been leased for the purpose of making patent shot! The prospect from the top of Baliol's Tower commands a rich and magnificent view of the wooded valley of the Tees.

* P. 171.—The use of complete suits of armour was fallen into disuse during the Civil War, though they were still worn by leaders of rank and importance. "In the reign of King James I.," says our military antiquary, "no great alterations were made in the article of defensive armour, except that the buff-coat, or jerkin, which was originally worn under the cuirass, now became frequently a substitute for it, it having been found that a good buff leather would of itself resist the stroke of a sword; this, however, only occasionally took place among the light-armed cavalry and infantry, complete suits of armour being still used among the heavy horse. Buff-coats continued to be worn by the city trained-bands till within the memory of persons now living, so that defensive armour may, in some measure, be said to have terminated in the same materials with which it began, that is, the skins of animals, or leather." — GROSE'S *Military Antiquities.* Lond. 1801, 4to, vol. ii. p. 323.

Of the buff-coats, which were worn over the corslets, several are yet preserved; and Captain Grose has given an engraving of one which was used in the time of Charles I. by Sir Francis Rhodes, Bart. of Balbrough-Hall, Derbyshire.

* P. 171.—In this character I have attempted to sketch one of those West India adventurers, who, during the course of the seventeenth century, were popularly known by the name of Bucaniers. The successes of the English in the predatory incursions upon Spanish America, during the reign of Elizabeth, had never been forgotten; and, from that period downward, the exploits of Drake and Raleigh were imitated, upon a smaller scale indeed, but with equally desperate valour, by small bands of pirates, gathered from all nations, but chiefly French and English. The engrossing policy of the Spaniards tended greatly to increase the number of these freebooters, from whom their commerce and colonies suffered, in the issue, dreadful calamity.

* P. 172.—The well-known and desperate battle of Long-Marston Moor, which terminated so unfortunately for the cause of Charles, commenced under very different auspices. Prince Rupert had marched with an army of 20,000 men for the relief of York, then besieged by Sir Thomas Fairfax, at the head of the Parliamentary army, and the Earl of Leven, with the Scottish auxiliary forces. In this he so completely succeeded, that he compelled the besiegers to retreat to Marston Moor, a large open plain, about eight miles distant from the city. Thither they were followed by the Prince, who had now united to his army the garrison of York, probably not less than ten thousand men strong, under the gallant Marquis (then Earl) of Newcastle. Whitelocke has recorded, with much impartiality, the following particulars of this eventful day:—"The right wing of the Parliament was commanded by Sir Thomas Fairfax, and consisted of all his horse, and three regiments of the Scots horse; the left wing was commanded by the Earl of Manchester and Colonel Cromwell. One body of their foot was commanded by Lord Fairfax, and consisted of his foot, and two brigades of the Scots foot for reserve; and the main body of the rest of the foot was commanded by General Leven.

"The right wing of the Prince's army was commanded by the Earl of Newcastle; the left wing by the Prince himself; and the main body by General Goring, Sir Charles Lucas, and Major-General Porter. Thus were both sides drawn up into battalia.

"July 3rd, 1644. In this posture both armies faced each other, and about seven o'clock in the morning the fight began between them. The Prince, with his left wing, fell on the Parliament's right wing, routed them, and pursued them a great way; the like did General Goring, Lucas, and Porter, upon the Parliament's main body. The three generals, giving all for lost, hasted out of the field, and many of their soldiers fled, and threw down their arms; the King's forces too eagerly following them, the victory, now almost achieved by them, was again snatched out of their hands. For Colonel Cromwell, with the brave regiment of his countrymen, and Sir Thomas Fairfax, having rallied some of his horse, fell upon the Prince's right wing, where the Earl of Newcastle was, and routed them; and the rest of their companions rallying, they fell all together upon the divided bodies of Rupert and Goring, and totally dispersed them, and obtained a complete victory, after three hours' fight.

"From this battle and the pursuit, some reckon were buried 7,000 Englishmen: all agree that above 3,000 of the Prince's men were slain in the battle, besides those in the chase, and 3,000 prisoners taken, many of their chief officers, twenty-five pieces of ordnance, forty-

seven colours, 10,000 arms, two waggons of carabins and pistols, 130 barrels of powder, and all their bag and baggage."—WHITELOCKE'S *Memoirs*, fol. p. 89. Lond. 1682.

* P. 174.—Monckton and Mitton are villages near the river Ouse, and not very distant from the field of battle. The particulars of the action were violently disputed at the time.

* P. 174.—Cromwell, with his regiment of cuirassiers, had a principal share in turning the fate of the day at Marston Moor; which was equally matter of triumph to the Independents, and of grief and heart-burning to the Presbyterians and to the Scottish.

* P. 174.—In a poem, entitled, "The Lay of the Reedwater Minstrel," Newcastle, 1809, this tale, with many others peculiar to the valley of the Reed, is commemorated:—"The particulars of the traditional story of Parcy Reed of Troughend, and the Halls of Girsonfield, the author had from a descendant of the family of Reed. From his account, it appears that Percival Reed, Esquire, a keeper of Reedsdale, was betrayed by the Halls (hence denominated the false-hearted Ha's) to a band of moss-troopers of the name of Crosier, who slew him at Batinghope, near the source of the Reed.

"The Halls were, after the murder of Parcy Reed, held in such universal abhorrence and contempt by the inhabitants of Reedsdale, for their cowardly and treacherous behaviour, that they were obliged to leave the country." In another passage, we are informed that the ghost of the injured Borderer is supposed to haunt the banks of a brook called the Pringle. These Reeds of Troughend were a very ancient family, as may be conjectured from their deriving their surname from the river on which they had their mansion. An epitaph on one of their tombs affirms that the family held their lands of Troughend, which are situated on the Reed, nearly opposite to Otterburn, for the incredible space of nine hundred years.

* P. 174.—Risingham, upon the river Reed, near the beautiful hamlet of Woodburn, is an ancient Roman Station, formerly called Habitancum. Camden says, that in his time the popular account bore, that it had been the abode of a deity, or giant, called Magon; and appeals, in support of this tradition, as well as to the etymology of Risingham, or Reisenham, which signifies, in German, the habitation of the giants, to two Roman altars taken out of the river, inscribed, DEO MOGONTI CADENORUM. About half-a-mile distant from Risingham, upon an eminence covered with scattered birch-trees and fragments of rock, there is cut upon a large rock, in *alto relievo*, a remarkable figure, called Robin of Risingham, or Robin of Reedsdale. It presents a hunter, with his bow raised in one hand, and in the other what seems to be a hare. There is a quiver at the back of the figure, and he is dressed in a long coat, or kirtle, coming down to the knees, and meeting close, with a girdle bound round him. Dr. Horseley, who saw all monuments of antiquity with Roman eyes, inclines to think this figure a Roman archer: and certainly the bow is rather of the ancient size than of that which was so formidable in the hand of the English archers of the Middle Ages. But the rudeness of the whole figure prevents our founding strongly upon mere inaccuracy of proportion. The popular tradition is, that it represents a giant, whose brother resided at Woodburn, and he himself at Risingham. It adds, that they subsisted by hunting, and that one of them, finding the game become too scarce to support them, poisoned his companion, in whose memory the monument was engraved. What strange and tragic circumstance may be concealed under this legend, or whether it is utterly apocryphal, it is now impossible to discover.

* P. 174.—The "statutes of the Bucaniers" were, in reality, more equitable than could have been expected from the state of society under which they had been formed. They chiefly related, as may readily be conjectured, to the distribution and the inheritance of their plunder.

When the expedition was completed, the fund of prize-money acquired was thrown together, each party taking his oath that he had retained or concealed no part of the common stock. If any one transgressed in this important particular, the punishment was, his being set ashore on some desert key or island, to shift for himself as he could. The owners of the vessel had then their share assigned for the expenses of the outfit. These were generally old pirates, settled at Tobago, Jamaica, St. Domingo, or some other French or English settlement. The surgeon's and carpenter's salaries, with the price of provisions and ammunition, were also defrayed. Then followed the compensation due to the maimed and wounded, rated according to the damage they had sustained; as six hundred pieces of eight, or six slaves, for the loss of an arm or a leg, and so in proportion.

"After this act of justice and humanity, the remainder of the booty was divided into as many shares as there were Bucaniers. The commander could only lay claim to a single share, as the rest; but they complimented him with two or three, in proportion as he had acquitted himself to their satisfaction. When the vessel was not the property of the whole company, the person who had fitted it out, and furnished it with necessary arms and ammunition, was entitled to a third of all the prizes. Favour had never any influence in the division of the booty, for every share was determined by lot. Instances of such rigid justice as this are not easily met with, and they extended even to the dead. Their share was given to the man who was known to be their companion when alive, and therefore their heir. If the person who had been killed had no intimate, his part was sent to his relations, when they were known. If there were no friends nor relations, it was distributed in charity to the poor and to churches, which were to pray for the person in whose name these benefactions were given, the fruits of inhuman, but necessary piratical plunder."—RAYNAL'S *History of European Settlements in the East and West Indies, by Justamond*. Lond. 1776, 8vo, iii. p. 41.

* P. 177.—The view from Barnard Castle commands the rich and magnificent valley of Tees. Immediately adjacent to the river, the banks are very thickly wooded; at a little distance they are more open and cultivated; but, being interspersed with hedge-rows, and with isolated trees of great size and age, they still retain the richness of woodland scenery. The river itself flows in a deep trench of solid rock, chiefly limestone and marble. The finest view of its romantic course is from a handsome modern-built bridge over the Tees, by the late Mr. Morritt of Rokeby.

* P. 178.—The ruins of this abbey, or priory (for Tanner calls it the former, and Leland the latter), are beautifully situated upon the angle formed by a little dell called Thorsgill, at its junction with the Tees.

* P. 178.—Close behind the George Inn at Greta Bridge, there is a well-preserved Roman encampment, surrounded with a triple ditch, lying between the river Greta and a brook called the Tutta. The four entrances are easily to be discerned.

* P. 178.—This ancient manor long gave name to a family by whom it is said to have been possessed from the Conquest downward, and who are at different times distinguished in history. It was the Baron of Rokeby who finally defeated the insurrection of the Earl of Northumberland, *tempore Hen. IV.* The Rokeby, or Rokesby, family continued to be distinguished until the great Civil War, when, having embraced the cause of Charles I., they suffered severely by fines and confiscations. The estate then passed from its ancient possessors to the family of the Robinsons, from whom it was purchased by the father of my valued friend, the present proprietor.

* P. 178.—What follows is an attempt to describe the romantic glen, or rather ravine, through which the Greta finds a passage between Rokeby and Mortham; the former situated upon the left bank of Greta, the latter on the right bank, about half-a-mile nearer to its junction with the Tees.

* P. 179.—"Also I shall show very briefly what force conjurers and witches have in constraining the elements enchanted by them or others, that they may exceed or fall short of their natural order: premising this, that the extream land of North Finland and Lapland was so taught witchcraft formerly in heathenish times, as if they had learned this cursed art from Zoroastres the Persian; though other inhabitants by the sea-coasts are reported to be bewitched with the same madness; for they exercise this devilish art, of all the arts of the world, to admiration; and in this, or other such like mischief, they commonly agree. The Finlanders were wont formerly, amongst their other errors of gentilisme, to sell winds to merchants that were stopt on their coast by contrary weather; and when they had their price, they knit three magical knots, not like to the laws of Cassius, bound up with a thong, and they gave them unto the merchants; observing that rule, that when they unloosed the first they should have a good gale of wind; when the second, a stronger wind; but when they untied the third, they should have such cruel tempests, that they should not be able to look out of the forecastle to avoid the rocks, nor move a foot to pull down the sails, nor stand at the helm to govern the ships; and they made an unhappy trial of the truth of it who denied that there was any such power in these knots."

* P. 179.—"Ericus, King of Sweden, in his time was held second to none in the magical art; and he was so familiar with the evil spirits, which he exceedingly adored, that which way soever he turned his cap, the wind would presently blow that way."—OLAUS MAGNUS's *History of the Goths, Swedes, and Vandals.* London, 1658, folio, pp. 45 and 47.

* P. 179.—"The Demon Frigate." This is an allusion to a well-known nautical superstition concerning a fantastic vessel, called by sailors the Flying Dutchman, and supposed to be seen about the latitude of the Cape of Good Hope. She is distinguished from earthly vessels by bearing a press of sail when all others are unable, from stress of weather, to show an inch of canvas. The cause of her wandering is not altogether certain; but the general account is, that she was originally a vessel loaded with great wealth, on board of which some horrid act of murder and piracy had been committed; that the plague broke out among the wicked crew who had perpetrated the crime, and that they sailed in vain from port to port, offering, as the price of shelter, the whole of their ill-gotten wealth; that they were excluded from every harbour, for fear of the contagion which was devouring them; and that, as a punishment of their crimes, the apparition of the ship still continues to haunt those seas in which the catastrophe took place, and is considered by the mariners as the worst of all possible omens.

* P. 179.—What contributed much to the security of the Bucaniers about the Windward Islands, was the great number of little islets, called in that country *keys*. These are small sandy patches, appearing just above the surface of the ocean, covered only with a few bushes and weeds, but sometimes affording springs of water, and, in general, much frequented by turtle. Such little uninhabited spots afforded the pirates good harbours, either for refitting or for the purpose of ambush; they were occasionally the hiding-place of their treasure, and often afforded a shelter to themselves. As many of the atrocities which they practised on their prisoners were committed in such spots, there are some of these keys which even now have an indifferent reputation among seamen, and where they are with difficulty prevailed on to remain ashore at night, on account of the visionary terrors incident to places which have been thus contaminated.

* P. 180.—The castle of Mortham, which Leland terms "Mr. Rokesby's Place, in *ripa citer*, scant a quarter of a mile from Greta Bridge, and not a quarter of a mile beneath into Tees," is a picturesque tower, surrounded by buildings of different ages, now converted into a farm-house and offices.

Its situation is eminently beautiful, occupy-

Greta winds out of the dark, narrow, and romantic dell, which the text has attempted to describe, and flows onward through a more open valley to meet the Tees about a quarter of a mile from the castle. Mortham is surrounded by old trees, happily and widely grouped with Mr. Morritt's new plantations.

* P. 181.—If time did not permit the Bucaniers to lavish away their plunder in their usual debaucheries, they were wont to hide it, with many superstitious solemnities, in the desert islands and keys which they frequented, and where much treasure, whose lawless owners perished without reclaiming it, is still supposed to be concealed. The most cruel of mankind are often the most superstitious; and these pirates are said to have had recourse to a horrid ritual, in order to secure an unearthly guardian to their treasures. They killed a Negro or Spaniard, and buried him with the treasure, believing that his spirit would haunt the spot, and terrify away all intruders. I cannot produce any other authority on which this custom is ascribed to them than that of maritime tradition, which is, however, amply sufficient for the purposes of poetry.

* P. 181.—All who are conversant with the administration of criminal justice, must remember many occasions in which malefactors appear to have conducted themselves with a species of infatuation, either by making unnecessary confidences respecting their guilt, or by sudden and involuntary allusions to circumstances by which it could not fail to be exposed. A remarkable instance occurred in the celebrated case of Eugene Aram. A skeleton being found near Knaresborough, was supposed, by the persons who gathered around the spot, to be the remains of one Clarke, who had disappeared some years before, under circumstances leading to a suspicion of his having been murdered. One Houseman, who had mingled in the crowd, suddenly said, while looking at the skeleton, and hearing the opinion which was buzzed around, "That is no more Dan Clarke's bone than it is mine!"—a sentiment expressed so positively, and with such peculiarity of manner, as to lead all who heard him to infer that he must necessarily know where the real body had been interred. Accordingly, being apprehended, he confessed having assisted Eugene Aram to murder Clarke, and to hide his body in Saint Robert's Cave. It happened to the author himself, while conversing with a person accused of an atrocious crime, for the purpose of rendering him professional assistance upon his trial, to hear the prisoner, after the most solemn and reiterated protestations that he was guiltless, suddenly, and, as it were, involuntarily, in the course of his communications, make such an admission as was altogether incompatible with innocence.

* P. 183.—After the battle of Marston Moor, the Earl of Newcastle retired beyond sea in disgust, and many of his followers laid down their arms, and made the best composition they could with the Committees of Parliament. Fines were imposed upon them in proportion and these fines were often bestowed upon such persons as had deserved well of the commons. In some circumstances it happened that the oppressed cavaliers were fain to form family alliances with some powerful person among the triumphant party.

* P. 183.—"What manner of cattle-stealers they are that inhabit these valleys in the marches of both kingdoms, John Lesley, a Scotche man himself, and Bishop of Ross, will inform you. They sally out of their own borders in the night, in troops, through unfrequented by-ways and many intricate windings. All the day-time they refresh themselves and their horses in lurking holes they had pitched upon before, till they arrive in the dark in these places they have a design upon. As soon as they have seized upon the booty, they, in like manner, return home in the night, through blind ways, and fetching many a compass. The more skilful any captain is to pass through those wild deserts, crooked turnings, and deep precipices, in the thickest mists, his reputation is the greater, and he is looked upon as a man of an excellent head."—CAMDEN'S *Britannia*.

The inhabitants of the valleys of Tyne and Reed were, in ancient times, so inordinately addicted to these depredations, that in 1564, the Incorporated Merchant-adventurers of Newcastle made a law that none born in these districts should be admitted apprentice. The inhabitants are stated to be so generally addicted to rapine, that no faith could be reposed in those proceeding from "such lewde and wicked progenitors." This regulation continued to stand unrepealed until 1771. A beggar, in an old play, describes himself as "born in Redesdale, in Northumberland, and come of a wight-riding surname, called the Robsons, good honest men and true, *saving a little shifting for their living, God help them!*"—a description which would have applied to most Borderers on both sides.

* P. 184.—After one of the recent battles, in which the Irish rebels were defeated, one of their most active leaders was found in a bog, in which he was immersed up to the shoulders, while his head was concealed by an impending ledge of turf. Being detected and seized, notwithstanding his precaution, he became solicitous to know how his retreat had been discovered. "I caught," answered the Sutherland Highlander, by whom he was taken, "the sparkle of your eye." Those who are accustomed to mark hares upon their form usually discover them by the same circumstance.

* P. 186.—The troops of the King, when they first took the field, were as well disciplined as could be expected from circumstances. But as the circumstances of Charles became less favourable, and his funds for regularly paying his forces decreased, habits of military license prevailed among them in greater excess. Lacy the player, who served his master during the Civil War, brought out, after the Restoration, a piece called The Old Troop, in which he seems to have commemorated some real incidents which occurred in his military career. The names of the officers of the Troop suffi-

ciently express their habits. We have Flea-flint Plunder-Master-General, Captain Ferret-farm, and Quarter-Master Burn-drop. The officers of the Troop are in league with these worthies, and connive at their plundering the country for a suitable share in the booty. All this was undoubtedly drawn from the life, which Lacy had an opportunity to study. The moral of the whole is comprehended in a rebuke given to the lieutenant, whose disorders in the country are said to prejudice the King's cause more than his courage in the field could recompense. The piece is by no means void of farcical humour.

* P. 186.—The banks of the Greta, below Rutherford Bridge, abound in seams of greyish slate, which are wrought in some places to a very great depth under ground, thus forming artificial caverns, which, when the seam has been exhausted, are gradually hidden by the underwood which grows in profusion upon the romantic banks of the river. In times of public confusion, they might be well adapted to the purposes of banditti.

* P. 188.—There was a short war with Spain in 1625–6, which will be found to agree pretty well with the chronology of the poem. But probably Bertram held an opinion very common among the maritime heroes of the age, that "there was no peace beyond the Line." The Spanish *guarda-costas* were constantly employed in aggressions upon the trade and settlements of the English and French; and, by their own severities, gave room for the system of bucaniering, at first adopted in self-defence and retaliation, and afterwards persevered in from habit and thirst of plunder.

* P. 188.—The laws of the Bucaniers, and their successors the Pirates, however severe and equitable, were, like other laws, often set aside by the stronger party. Their quarrels about the division of the spoil fill their history, and they as frequently arose out of mere frolic, or the tyrannical humour of their chiefs. An anecdote of Teach (called Blackbeard) shows that their habitual indifference for human life extended to their companions, as well as their enemies and captives:—

"One night, drinking in his cabin with Hands, the pilot, and another man, Blackbeard, without any provocation, privately draws out a small pair of pistols, and cocks them under the table, which being perceived by the man, he withdrew upon deck, leaving Hands, the pilot, and the captain together. When the pistols were ready, he blew out the candles, and, crossing his hands, discharged them at his company. Hands, the master, was shot through the knee, and lamed for life; the other pistol did no execution."—JOHNSON'S *History of Pirates*. Lond. 1724, 8vo, vol. i., p. 38.

* P. 189.—The last verse of this song is taken from the fragment of an old Scottish ballad, of which I only recollected two verses when the first edition of Rokeby was published. Mr. Thomas Sheridan kindly pointed out to me an entire copy of this beautiful song, which seems to express the fortunes of some followers of the Stuart family:—

"It was a' for our rightful king,
That we left fair Scotland's strand,
It was a' for our rightful king
That we e'er saw Irish land,
My dear,
That we e'er saw Irish land.

"Now all is done that man can do,
And all is done in vain!
My love! my native land, adieu!
For I must cross the main,
My dear,
For I must cross the main.

"He turned him round and right about,
All on the Irish shore,
He gave his bridle-reins a shake,
With, Adieu for evermore,
My dear!
Adieu for evermore!

"The soldier frae the war returns,
And the merchant frae the main,
But I hae parted wi' my love,
And ne'er to meet again,
My dear,
And ne'er to meet again.

"When day is gone and night is come,
And a' are boun' to sleep,
I think on them that 's far awa
The lee-lang night, and weep,
My dear,
The lee-lang night, and weep."

* P. 190.—This is a fragment of an old cross called *Rere-cross* or *Ree-cross*, with its pediment, surrounded by an intrenchment, upon the very summit of the waste ridge of Stanmore, near a small house of entertainment called the Spittal. The situation of the cross, and the pains taken to defend it, seem to indicate that it was intended for a land-mark of importance.

* P. 190.—About the year of God 866, the Danes, under their celebrated leaders Inguar (more properly Agnar) and Hubba, sons, it is said, of the still more celebrated Regnar Lodbrog, invaded Northumberland, bringing with them the magical standard, so often mentioned in poetry, called REAFEN, or Rumfan, from its bearing the figure of a Raven. The Danes renewed and extended their incursions, and began to colonise, establishing a kind of capital at York, from which they spread their conquests and incursions in every direction. Stanmore, which divides the mountains of Westmoreland and Cumberland, was probably the boundary of the Danish kingdom in that direction.

* P. 190.—The heathen Danes have left several traces of their religion in the upper part of Teesdale. Balder-garth, which derives its name from the unfortunate son of Odin, is a tract of waste land on the very ridge of Stanmore; and a brook which falls into the Tees near Barnard Castle is named after the same deity. A field upon the bank of the Tees is also termed Woden-Croft, from the supreme deity of the Edda.

* P. 191.—The O'Neale here meant—for more than one succeeded to the chieftainship

during the reign of Elizabeth—was Hugh, the grandson of Con O'Neale, called Con Bacco, or the Lame. His father, Matthew O'Kelly, was illegitimate, and, being the son of a blacksmith's wife, was usually called Matthew the Blacksmith. His father, nevertheless, destined his succession to him; and he was created, by Elizabeth, Baron of Dungannon. Upon the death of Con Bacco, this Matthew was slain by his brother. Hugh narrowly escaped the same fate, and was protected by the English. Shane O'Neale, his uncle, called Shane Dymas, was succeeded by Turlough Lynogh O'Neale; after whose death Hugh, having assumed the chieftainship, became nearly as formidable to the English as any by whom it had been possessed. He rebelled repeatedly, and as often made submissions, of which it was usually a condition that he should not any longer assume the title of O'Neale; in lieu of which he was created Earl of Tyrone. But this condition he never observed longer than until the pressure of superior force was withdrawn. His baffling the gallant Earl of Essex in the field, and overreaching him in a treaty, was the induction to that nobleman's tragedy. Lord Mountjoy succeeded in finally subjugating O'Neale; but it was not till the succession of James, to whom he made personal submission, and was received with civility at court.

* P. 191.—The chief victory which Tyrone obtained over the English was in a battle fought near Blackwater, while he besieged a fort garrisoned by the English, which commanded the passes into his country.

Tyrone is said to have entertained a personal animosity against the knight-marshal, Sir Henry Bagnal, whom he accused of detaining the letters which he sent to Queen Elizabeth, explanatory of his conduct, and offering terms of submission. The river, called by the English Blackwater, is termed in Irish, Avon-Duff, which has the same signification. Both names are mentioned by Spenser in his "Marriage of the Thames and the Medway." But I understand that his verses relate not to the Blackwater of Ulster, but to a river of the same name in the south of Ireland:—

"Swift Avon-Duff, which of the Englishmen
Is called Blackwater."

* P. 191.—"*Eudox.* What is that which you call Tanist and Tanistry? These be names and terms never heard of nor known to us.

"*Iren.* It is a custom amongst all the Irish, that presently after the death of one of their chiefe lords or captaines, they doe presently assemble themselves to a place generally appointed and knowne unto them, to choose another in his stead, where they do nominate and elect, for the most part not the eldest sonne, nor any of the children of the lord deceased, but the next to him in blood, that is, the eldest and worthiest, as commonly the next brother unto him, if he have any, or the next cousin, or so forth, as any is elder in that kindred or sept; and then next to them doe they choose the next of the blood to be Tanist, who shall next succeed him in the said captainry, if he live thereunto."—SPENSER'S *View of the State of Ireland*, apud *Works*, Lond. 1805, 8vo, vol. viii., p. 306.

The Tanist, therefore, of O'Neale, was the heir-apparent of his power. This kind of succession appears also to have regulated, in very remote times, the succession to the crown of Scotland. It would have been imprudent, if not impossible, to have asserted a minor's right of succession in those stormy days, when the principles of policy were summed up in my friend Mr. Wordsworth's lines:—

———"the good old rule
Sufficeth them; the simple plan,
That they should take who have the power,
And they should keep who can."

* P. 192.—The Irish chiefs, in their intercourse with the English, and with each other, were wont to assume the language and style of independent royalty.

* P. 193.—Neal Naighvallach, or Of the Nine Hostages, is said to have been monarch of all Ireland, during the end of the fourth or beginning of the fifth century. He exercised a predatory warfare on the coast of England and of Bretagne, or Armorica; and from the latter country brought off the celebrated Saint Patrick, a youth of sixteen, among other captives, whom he transported to Ireland. Neal derived his epithet from nine nations, or tribes, whom he held under his subjection, and from whom he took hostages.

* P. 193.—This Shane-Dymas, or John the Wanton, held the title and power of O'Neale in the earlier part of Elizabeth's reign, against whom he rebelled repeatedly.

"This chieftain is handed down to us as the most proud and profligate man on earth. He was immoderately addicted to women and wine. He is said to have had 200 tuns of wine at once in his cellar at Dandram, but usquebaugh was his favourite liquor. He spared neither age nor condition of the fair sex. Altho' so illiterate that he could not write, he was not destitute of address, his understanding was strong, and his courage daring. He had 600 men for his guard; 4,000 foot, 1,000 horse for the field. He claimed superiority over all the lords of Ulster, and called himself king thereof."—CAMDEN'S *Britannia*, by Gough. Lond. 1806, fol. vol. iv. p. 442.

When reduced to extremity by the English, and forsaken by his allies, this Shane-Dymas fled to Clandeboy, then occupied by a colony of Scottish Highlanders of the family of Mac-Donell. He was at first courteously received; but by degrees they began to quarrel about the slaughter of some of their friends whom Shane-Dymas had put to death, and advancing from words to deeds, fell upon him with their broadswords, and cut him to pieces. After his death, a law was made that none should presume to take the name and title of O'Neale.

* P. 193.—The O'Neales were closely allied with this powerful and warlike family; for Henry Owen O'Neale married the daughter of Thomas, Earl of Kildare, and their son Con-More married his cousin-german, a daughter of Gerald, Earl of Kildare. This Con-More cursed any of his posterity who should learn the Eng-

lish language, sow corn, or build houses, so as to invite the English to settle in their country. Others ascribe this anathema to his son Con-Bacco.—See WALKER'S *Irish Bards*, p. 140.

* P. 194.—Originally, the order of chivalry embraced three ranks:—1. The Page; 2. The Squire; 3. The Knight;—a gradation which seems to have been imitated in the mystery of freemasonry. But, before the reign of Charles I., the custom of serving as a squire had fallen into disuse, though the order of the page was still, to a certain degree, in observance. This state of servitude was so far from inferring anything degrading, that it was considered as the regular school for acquiring every quality necessary for future distinction.

* P. 198.—The ancient castle of Rokeby stood exactly upon the site of the present mansion, by which a part of its walls is enclosed. It is surrounded by a profusion of fine wood, and the park in which it stands is adorned by the junction of the Greta and of the Tees. The title of Baron Rokeby of Armagh was, in 1777, conferred on the Right Reverend Richard Robinson, Primate of Ireland, descended of the Robinsons, formerly of Rokeby, in Yorkshire.

* * P. 199.—The Filea, or Ollamh Re Dan, was the proper bard, or, as the name literally implies, poet. Each chieftain of distinction had one or more in his service, whose office was usually hereditary. There were itinerant bards of less elevated rank, but all were held in the highest veneration.

* P. 200.—Clandeboy is a district of Ulster, formerly possessed by the sept of the O'Neales, and Slieve-Donard a romantic mountain in the same province. The clan was ruined after Tyrone's great rebellion, and their places of abode laid desolate. The ancient Irish, wild and uncultivated in other respects, did not yield even to their descendants in practising the most free and extended hospitality.

* P. 200.—Marwood Chase is the old Park extending along the Durham side of the Tees, attached to Barnard Castle. Toller Hill is an eminence on the Yorkshire side of the river, commanding a superb view of the ruins.

* P. 201.—Among the entertainments presented to Elizabeth at Kenilworth Castle, was the introduction of a person designed to represent a travelling minstrel, who entertained her with a solemn story out of the Acts of King Arthur. Of this person's dress and appearance Mr. Laneham has given us a very accurate account, transferred by Bishop Percy to the preliminary Dissertation on Minstrels, prefixed to his *Reliques of Ancient Poetry*, vol i.

NOTES TO THE LORD OF THE ISLES.

* P. 218.—The ruins of the Castle of Artornish are situated upon a promontory on the Morven or mainland side of the Sound of Mull, a name given to the deep arm of the sea which divides that island from the continent. The situation is wild and romantic in the highest degree, having on the one hand a high and precipitous chain of rocks overhanging the sea, and on the other the narrow entrance to the beautiful salt-water lake called Loch Alline, which is in many places finely fringed with copsewood. The ruins of Artornish are not now very considerable, and consist chiefly of the remains of an old keep or tower, with fragments of outward defences. But in former days it was a place of great consequence, being one of the principal strongholds which the Lords of the Isles, during the period of their stormy independence, possessed upon the mainland of Argyleshire. It is almost opposite to the Bay of Aros, in the Island of Mull, where there was another castle, the occasional residence of the Lords of the Isles.

* P. 218.—The seal displays a taste for music, which could scarcely be expected from his habits and local predilections. They will long follow a boat in which any musical instrument is played, and even a tune simply whistled has attractions for them. The Dean of the Isles says of Heiskar, a small uninhabited rock, about twelve (Scottish) miles from the Isle of Uist, that an infinite slaughter of seals takes place there.

* P. 219.—The Sound of Mull, which divides that island from the continent of Scotland, is one of the most striking scenes which the Hebrides afford to the traveller. Sailing from Oban to Aros, or Tobermory, through a narrow channel, yet deep enough to bear vessels of the largest burden, he has on his left the bold and mountainous shores of Mull; on the right, those of that district of Argyleshire called Morven, or Morvern, successively indented by deep salt-water lochs, running up many miles inland. To the south-eastward arise a prodigious range of mountains, among which Cruachan-Ben is pre-eminent. And to the north-east is the no less huge and picturesque range of the Ardnamurchan hills. Many ruinous castles, situated generally upon cliffs overhanging the ocean, add interest to the scene.

* P. 219.—Somerled was thane of Argyle and Lord of the Isles about the middle of the twelfth century. He seems to have exercised his authority in both capacities, independent of the crown of Scotland, against which he often stood in hostility. He made various incursions upon the western lowlands during the reign of Malcolm IV., and seems to have made peace with him upon the terms of an independent prince, about the year 1157. In 1164, he resumed the war against Malcolm, and invaded Scotland with a large, but probably a tumultuary army, collected in the isles, in the mainland of Argyleshire, and in the neighbouring provinces of Ireland. He was defeated and slain, in an engagement with a very inferior force, near Renfrew.

* P. 219.—The representative of this inde-

pendent principality, for such it seems to have been, though acknowledging occasionally the pre-eminence of the Scottish crown, was, at the period of the poem, Angus, called Angus Og; but the name has been, *euphoniæ gratia*, exchanged for that of Ronald, which frequently occurs in the genealogy. Angus was a protector of Robert Bruce, whom he received in his Castle of Dunnaverty during the time of his greatest distress.

* P. 220.—The House of Lorn was, like the Lord of the Isles, descended from a son of Somerled, slain at Renfrew, in 1164. This son obtained the succession of his mainland territories, comprehending the greater part of the three districts of Lorn, in Argyleshire, and of course might rather be considered as petty princes than feudal barons. They assumed the patronymic appellation of Mac-Dougal, by which they are distinguished in the history of the middle ages.

* P. 221.—The phenomenon called by sailors Sea-fire, is one of the most beautiful and interesting which is witnessed in the Hebrides. At times the ocean appears entirely illuminated around the vessel, and a long train of lambent coruscations are perpetually bursting upon the sides of the vessel, or pursuing her wake through the darkness.

* P. 222.—"The Bruce."—See note to p. 225.

* P. 223.—Sir Egidius, or Giles de Argentine, was one of the most accomplished knights of the period. He had served in the wars of Henry of Luxemburg with such high reputation, that he was, in popular estimation, the third worthy of the age. Those to whom fame assigned precedence over him were, Henry of Luxemburg himself, and Robert Bruce. Argentine had warred in Palestine, encountered thrice with the Saracens, and had slain two antagonists in each engagement:—an easy matter, he said, for one Christian knight to slay two Pagan dogs.

* P. 224.—A Hebridean drinking cup, of the most ancient and curious workmanship, has been long preserved in the castle of Dunvegan, in Skye, the romantic seat of Mac-Leod of Macleod, the chief of that ancient and powerful clan. The horn of Rorie More, preserved in the same family, and recorded by Dr. Johnson, is not to be compared with this piece of antiquity, which is one of the greatest curiosities in Scotland.

* P. 224.—It must be remembered by all who have read the Scottish history, that after he had slain Comyn at Dumfries, and asserted his right to the Scottish crown, Robert Bruce was reduced to the greatest extremity by the English and their adherents. He was crowned at Scone by the general consent of the Scottish barons, but his authority endured but a short time. According to the phrase said to have been used by his wife, he was for that year "a summer king, but not a winter one."

* P. 225.—It has been generally mentioned in the preceding notes, that Robert Bruce, after his defeat at Methven, being hard pressed by the English, endeavoured, with the dispirited remnant of his followers, to escape from Breadalbane and the mountains of Perthshire into the Argyleshire Highlands. But he was encountered and repulsed, after a very severe engagement, by the Lord of Lorn. Bruce's personal strength and courage were never displayed to greater advantage than in this conflict. There is a tradition in the family of the Mac-Dougals of Lorn, that their chieftain engaged in personal battle with Bruce himself, while the latter was employed in protecting the retreat of his men; that Mac-Dougal was struck down by the king, whose strength of body was equal to his vigour of mind, and would have been slain on the spot, had not two of Lorn's vassals, a father and son, whom tradition terms Mac-Keoch, rescued him, by seizing the mantle of the monarch, and dragging him from above his adversary. Bruce rid himself of these foes by two blows of his redoubted battle-axe, but was so closely pressed by the other followers of Lorn, that he was forced to abandon the mantle, and brooch which fastened it, clasped in the dying grasp of the Mac-Keochs. A studded brooch, said to have been that which King Robert lost upon this occasion, was long preserved in the family of Mac-Dougal, and was lost in a fire which consumed their temporary residence.

* Pp. 225, 222.—"The Bruce and Kirkpatrick." Every reader must recollect that the proximate cause of Bruce's asserting his right to the crown of Scotland, was the death of John, called the Red Comyn. The causes of this act of violence, equally extraordinary from the high rank both of the perpetrator and sufferer, and from the place where the slaughter was committed, are variously related by the Scottish and English historians, and cannot now be ascertained. The fact that they met at the high altar of the Minorites, or Greyfriars' Church in Dumfries, that their difference broke out into high and insulting language, and that Bruce drew his dagger and stabbed Comyn, is certain. Rushing to the door of the church, Bruce met two powerful barons, Kirkpatrick of Closeburn, and James de Lindsay, who eagerly asked him what tidings? "Bad tidings," answered Bruce; "I doubt I have slain Comyn."—"Doubtest thou?" said Kirkpatrick; "I make sicker" (*i.e.*, sure). With these words, he and Lindsay rushed into the church, and despatched the wounded Comyn. The Kirkpatricks of Closeburn assumed, in memory of this deed, a hand holding a dagger, with the memorable words, "I make sicker."

* P. 225.—These knights are enumerated by Barbour among the small number of Bruce's adherents who remained in arms with him after the battle of Methven.

* P. 227.—It was anciently customary in the Highlands to bring the bride to the house of the husband. Nay, in some cases the complaisance was stretched so far, that she remained there upon trial for a twelvemonth; and the bridegroom, even after this period of cohabitation, retained an option of refusing to fulfil his engagement. It is said that a desperate feud ensued between the clans of Mac-Donald of Sleate and Mac-Leod, owing to the former chief having availed himself of

this license to send back to Dunvegan a sister or daughter of the latter. Mac-Leod, resenting the indignity, observed, that since there was no wedding bonfire, there should be one to solemnise the divorce. Accordingly, he burned and laid waste the territories of Mac-Donald, who retaliated, and a deadly feud, with all its accompaniments, took place in form.

* P. 227.—There is something singularly doubtful about the mode in which Wallace was taken. That he was betrayed to the English is indubitable; and popular fame charges Sir John Menteith with the indelible infamy. "Accursed," says Arnold Blair, "be the day of nativity of John de Menteith, and may his name be struck out of the book of life." But John de Menteith was all along a zealous favourer of the English interest, and was governor of Dumbarton Castle by commission from Edward the First; and therefore, as the accurate Lord Hailes has observed, could not be the friend and confidant of Wallace, as tradition states him to be. The truth seems to be, that Menteith, thoroughly engaged in the English interest, pursued Wallace closely, and made him prisoner through the treachery of an attendant, whom Peter Langtoft calls Jack Short. The infamy of seizing Wallace must, therefore, rest between a degenerate Scottish nobleman, the vassal of England, and a domestic, the obscure agent of his treachery; between Sir John Menteith, son of Walter, Earl of Menteith, and the traitor, Jack Short.

* P. 228.—John de Strathbogie, Earl of Athole, had attempted to escape out of the kingdom, but a storm cast him upon the coast, when he was taken, sent to London, and executed, with circumstances of great barbarity, being first half-strangled, then let down from the gallows while yet alive, barbarously dismembered, and his body burnt. Matthew of Westminster tells us that King Edward, then extremely ill, received great ease from the news that his relative was apprehended. "*Quo andito, Rex Angliæ, etsi gravissimo morbo tunc langueret, levius tamen tulit dolorem.*" To this singular expression the text alludes.

* P. 228.—Bruce uniformly professed, and probably felt, compunction for having violated the sanctuary of the church by the slaughter of Comyn; and finally, in his last hours, in testimony of his faith, penitence, and zeal, he requested James, Lord Douglas, to carry his heart to Jerusalem, to be there deposited in the Holy Sepulchre.

* P. 228.—So soon as the notice of Comyn's slaughter reached Rome, Bruce and his adherents were excommunicated. It was published first by the Archbishop of York, and renewed at different times, particularly by Lambyrton, Bishop of St. Andrews, in 1308; but it does not appear to have answered the purpose which the English monarch expected. Indeed, for reasons which it would be difficult to trace, the thunders of Rome descended upon the Scottish mountains with less effect than in more fertile countries. Probably the comparative poverty of the benefices occasioned that fewer foreign clergy settled in Scotland; and the interests of the native churchmen were linked with that of their country. Many of the Scottish prelates, Lambyrton the primate particularly, declared for Bruce, while he was yet under the ban of the church, although he afterwards again changed sides.

* P. 229.—This is not metaphorical. The echoes of Scotland did actually

> ——— "ring
> With the bloodhounds that bay'd for her fugitive king."

A very curious and romantic tale is told by Barbour upon this subject, which may be abridged as follows:—

When Bruce had again got footing in Scotland, in the spring of 1306, he continued to be in a very weak and precarious condition, gaining, indeed, occasional advantages, but obliged to fly before his enemies whenever they assembled in force. Upon one occasion, while he was lying with a small party in the wilds of Cumnock, in Ayrshire, Aymer de Valence, Earl of Pembroke, with his inveterate foe John of Lorn, came against him suddenly with eight hundred Highlanders, besides a large body of men-at-arms. They brought with them a slough-dog, or bloodhound, which, some say, had been once a favourite with the Bruce himself, and therefore was least likely to lose the trace.

Bruce, whose force was under four hundred men, continued to make head against the cavalry, till the men of Lorn had nearly cut off his retreat. Perceiving the danger of his situation, he acted as the celebrated and ill-requited Mina is said to have done in similar circumstances. He divided his force into three parts, appointed a place of rendezvous, and commanded them to retreat by different routes. But when John of Lorn arrived at the spot where they divided, he caused the hound to be put upon the trace, which immediately directed him to the pursuit of that party which Bruce headed. This, therefore, Lorn pursued with his whole force, paying no attention to the others. The king again subdivided his small body into three parts, and with the same result, for the pursuers attached themselves exclusively to that which he led in person. He then caused his followers to disperse, and retained only his foster-brother in his company. The slough-dog followed the trace, and, neglecting the others, attached himself and his attendants to the pursuit of the king. Lorn became convinced that his enemy was nearly in his power, and detached five of his most active attendants to follow him, and interrupt his flight. They did so with all the agility of mountaineers. "What aid wilt thou make?" said Bruce to his single attendant, when he saw the five men gain ground on him. "The best I can," replied his foster-brother. "Then," said Bruce, "here I make my stand." The five pursuers came up fast. The king took three to himself, leaving the other two to his foster-brother. He slew the first who encountered him; but observing his foster-brother hard pressed, he sprung to his assistance, and despatched one of his assail-

ants. Leaving him to deal with the survivor, he returned upon the other two, both of whom he slew before his foster-brother had despatched his single antagonist. When this hard encounter was over, with a courtesy which in the whole work marks Bruce's character, he thanked his foster-brother for his aid. "It likes you to say so," answered his follower; "but you yourself slew four of the five."—"True," said the king, "but only because I had better opportunity than you. They were not apprehensive of me when they saw me encounter three, so I had a moment's time to spring to thy aid, and to return equally unexpectedly upon my own opponents."

In the meanwhile Lorn's party approached rapidly, and the king and his foster-brother betook themselves to a neighbouring wood. Here they sat down, for Bruce was exhausted by fatigue, until the cry of the slough-hound came so near, that his foster-brother entreated Bruce to provide for his safety by retreating further. "I have heard," answered the king, "that whosoever will wade a bow-shot length down a running stream, shall make the slough-hound lose scent.—Let us try the experiment, for were yon devilish hound silenced, I should care little for the rest."

Lorn in the meanwhile advanced, and found the bodies of his slain vassals, over whom he made his moan, and threatened the most deadly vengeance. Then he followed the hound to the side of the brook down which the king had waded a great way. Here the hound was at fault, and John of Lorn, after long attempting in vain to recover Bruce's trace, relinquished the pursuit.

"Others," says Barbour, "affirm, that upon this occasion the king's life was saved by an excellent archer who accompanied him, and who, perceiving they would be finally taken by means of the bloodhound, hid himself in a thicket, and shot him with an arrow. In which way," adds the metrical biographer, "this escape happened I am uncertain, but at that brook the king escaped from his pursuers."

* P. 230.—I have followed the vulgar and inaccurate tradition, that Bruce fought against Wallace, and the array of Scotland, at the fatal battle of Falkirk. The story, which seems to have no better authority than that of Blind Harry, bears, that having made much slaughter during the engagement, he sat down to dine with the conquerors without washing the filthy witness from his hands.

" Fasting he was, and had been in great need,
Blooded were all his weapons and his weed;
Southeron lords scorn'd him in terms rude,
And said, Behold yon Scot eats his own blood.

" Then rued he sore, for reason bad be known,
That blood and land alike should be his own;
With them he long was, ere he got away,
But contrair Scots he fought not from that day.'

The account given by most of our historians, of the conversation between Bruce and Wallace over the Carron river, is equally apocryphal. There is full evidence that Bruce was not at that time on the English side, nor present at the battle of Falkirk; nay, that he acted as a guardian of Scotland, along with John Comyn, in the name of Baliol, and in opposition to the English.

* P. 231.—The extraordinary piece of scenery which I have here attempted to describe is, I think, unparalleled in any part of Scotland, at least in any which I have happened to visit. It lies just upon the frontier of the Laird of Mac-Leod's country, which is thereabouts divided from the estate of Mr. Mac-Allister of Strath-Aird, called Strathnardill by the Dean of the Isles.

* P. 235.—Imagination can hardly conceive anything more beautiful than the extraordinary grotto discovered not many years since upon the estate of Alexander Mac-Allister, Esq. of Straithaird. It has since been much and deservedly celebrated, and a full account of its beauties has been published by Dr. Mac-Leay of Oban. The general impression may perhaps be gathered from the following extract from a journal, which, written under the feelings of the moment, is likely to be more accurate than any attempt to recollect the impressions then received:—"The first entrance to this celebrated cave is rude and unpromising; but the light of the torches with which we were provided, was soon reflected from the roof, floor, and walls, which seem as if they were sheeted with marble, partly smooth, partly rough with frost-work and rustic ornaments, and partly seeming to be wrought into statuary. The floor forms a steep and difficult ascent, and might be fancifully compared to a sheet of water, which, while it rushed whitening and foaming down a declivity, had been suddenly arrested and consolidated by the spell of an enchanter. Upon attaining the summit of this ascent, the cave opens into a splendid gallery, adorned with the most dazzling crystallisations, and finally descends with rapidity to the brink of a pool of the most limpid water, about four or five yards broad. There opens beyond this pool a portal arch, formed by two columns of white spar, with beautiful chasing upon the sides, which promises a continuation of the cave. One of our sailors swam across, for there is no other mode of passing, and informed us (as indeed we partly saw by the light he carried) that the enchantment of Mac-Allister's cave terminates with this portal, a little beyond which there was only a rude cavern, speedily choked with stones and earth. But the pool, on the brink of which we stood, surrounded by the most fanciful mouldings, in a substance resembling white marble, and distinguished by the depth and purity of its waters, might have been the bathing grotto of a naiad. The groups of combined figures, projecting or embossed, by which the pool is surrounded, are exquisitely elegant and fanciful. A statuary might catch beautiful hints from the singular and romantic disposition of those stalactites. There is scarcely a form or group on which active fancy may not trace figures or grotesque ornaments, which have been gradually moulded in this cavern by the dropping of the calcareous water hardening into petrifications. Many of those fine groups have been injured by the senseless rage of ap-

propriation of recent tourists; and the grotto has lost (I am informed), through the smoke of torches, something of that vivid silver tint which was originally one of its chief distinctions. But enough of beauty remains to compensate for all that may be lost."—Mr. Mac-Allister of Strathaird has, with great propriety, built up the exterior entrance to this cave, in order that strangers may enter properly attended by a guide, to prevent any repetition of the wanton and selfish injury which this singular scene has already sustained.

* P. 236.—The generosity which does justice to the character of an enemy, often marks Bruce's sentiments, as recorded by the faithful Barbour. He seldom mentions a fallen enemy without praising such good qualities as he might possess. I shall only take one instance. Shortly after Bruce landed in Carrick, in 1306, Sir Ingram Bell, the English governor of Ayr, engaged a wealthy yeoman, who had hitherto been a follower of Bruce, to undertake the task of assassinating him. The king learned this treachery, as he is said to have done other secrets of the enemy, by means of a female with whom he had an intrigue. Shortly after he was possessed of this information, Bruce, resorting to a small thicket at a distance from his men, with only a single page to attend him, met the traitor, accompanied by two of his sons. They approached him with their wonted familiarity, but Bruce, taking his page's bow and arrow, commanded them to keep at a distance. As they still pressed forward with professions of zeal for his person and service, he, after a second warning, shot the father with the arrow; and being assaulted successively by the two sons, despatched first one, who was armed with an axe; then as the other charged him with a spear, avoided the thrust, struck the head from the spear, and cleft the skull of the assassin with a blow of his two-handed sword.

* P. 238.—Ronin (popularly called Rum, a name which a poet may be pardoned for avoiding if possible) is a very rough and mountainous island, adjacent to those of Eigg and Cannay. There is almost no arable ground upon it, so that, except in the plenty of the deer, which of course are now nearly extirpated, it still deserves the description bestowed by the Archdean of the Isles. "Ronin, sixteen myle north-wast from the ile of Coll, lyes ane ile callit Ronin Ile, of sixteen myle long, and six in bredthe in the narrowest, ane forest of heigh mountains, and abundance of little deir in it, quhilk deir will never be slane downwith, but the principal saittis man be in the height of the hill, because the deir will be callit upward ay be the tainchell, or without tynchel they will pass upwart perforce. In this ile will be gotten about Britane als many wild nests upon the plane mure as men pleasis to gadder, and yet by resson the fowls hes few to start them except deir. This ile lies from the west to the eist in lenth, and pertains to M'Kenabrey of Colla. Many solan geese are in this ile."—Monro's *Description of the Western Isles*, p. 18.

* P. 238.—These, and the following lines of the stanza, refer to a dreadful tale of feudal vengeance, of which unfortunately there are relics that still attest the truth. Scoor-Eigg is a high peak in the centre of the small Isle of Eigg, or Egg. It is well known to mineralogists, as affording many interesting specimens, and to others whom chance or curiosity may lead to the island, for the astonishing view of the mainland and neighbouring isles which it commands.

26th August, 1814.—At seven this morning we were in the Sound which divides the Isle of Rum from that of Eigg. The latter, though hilly and rocky, and traversed by a remarkably high and barren ridge, called Scoor-Rigg, has, in point of soil, a much more promising appearance. Southward of both lies the Isle of Muich, or Muck, a low and fertile island, and though the least, yet probably the most valuable of the three. We manned the boat, and rowed along the shore of Egg in quest of a cavern, which had been the memorable scene of a horrid feudal vengeance. We had rounded more than half the island, admiring the entrance of many a bold natural cave, which its rocks exhibited, without finding that which we sought, until we procured a guide. Nor, indeed, was it surprising that it should have escaped the search of strangers, as there are no outward indications more than might distinguish the entrance to a fox-earth. This noted cave has a very narrow opening, through which one can hardly creep on his knees and hands. It rises steep and lofty within, and runs into the bowels of the rock to the depth of 255 measured feet; the height at the entrance may be about three feet, but rises within to eighteen or twenty, and the breadth may vary in the same proportion. The rude and stony bottom of this cave is strewed with the bones of men, women, and children, the sad relics of the ancient inhabitants of the island, 200 in number, who were slain on the following occasion:—The Mac-Donalds of the Isle of Egg, a people dependent on Clan-Ranald, had done some injury to the Laird of Mac-Leod. The tradition of the isle says, that it was by a personal attack on the chieftain, in which his back was broken. But that of the other isles bears, more probably, that the injury was offered to two or three of the Mac-Leods, who, landing upon Eigg, and using some freedom with the young women, were seized by the islanders, bound hand and foot, and turned adrift in a boat, which the winds and waves safely conducted to Skye. To avenge the offence given, Mac-Leod sailed with such a body of men as rendered resistance hopeless. The natives, fearing his vengeance, concealed themselves in this cavern, and, after a strict search, the Mac-Leods went on board their galleys, after doing what mischief they could, concluding the inhabitants had left the isle, and betaken themselves to the Long Island, or some of Clan-Ranald's other possessions. But next morning they espied from the vessels a man upon the island, and immediately landing again, they traced his retreat by the marks of his footsteps, a light snow being unhappily on the ground. Mac-Leod then surrounded the cavern, summoned the subterranean garrison, and de-

manded that the individuals who had offended him should be delivered up to him. This was peremptorily refused. The chieftain then caused his people to divert the course of a rill of water, which, falling over the entrance of the cave, would have prevented his purposed vengeance. He then kindled at the entrance of the cavern a huge fire, composed of turf and fern, and maintained it with unrelenting assiduity, until all within were destroyed by suffocation. The date of this dreadful deed must have been recent, if one may judge from the fresh appearance of those relics. I brought off, in spite of the prejudice of our sailors, a skull from among the numerous specimens of mortality which the cavern afforded. Before re-embarking we visited another cave, opening to the sea, but of a character entirely different, being a large open vault, as high as that of a cathedral, and running back a great way into the rock at the same height. The height and width of the opening gives ample light to the whole. Here, after 1745, when the Catholic priests were scarcely tolerated, the priest of Eigg used to perform the Roman Catholic service, most of the islanders being of that persuasion. A huge ledge of rocks rising about half-way up one side of the vault, served for altar and pulpit; and the appearance of a priest and Highland congregation in such an extraordinary place of worship, might have engaged the pencil of Salvator."

* P. 238.—The ballad entitled "Macphail of Colonsay, and the Mermaid of Corrievrekin," [see Border Minstrelsy, vol. iv., p. 285] was composed by John Leyden, from a tradition which he found while making a tour through the Hebrides about 1801, soon before his fatal departure for India, where, after having made farther progress in Oriental literature than any man of letters who had embraced those studies, he died a martyr to his zeal for knowledge, in the island of Java, immediately after the landing of our forces, near Batavia, in August, 1811.

* P. 238.—The peninsula of Cantire is joined to South Knapdale by a very narrow isthmus, formed by the western and eastern Loch of Tarbat. These two saltwater lakes, or bays, encroach so far upon the land, and the extremities come so near to each other, that there is not above a mile of land to divide them.

* P. 239.—Loch Ranza is a beautiful bay, on the northern extremity of Arran, opening towards East Tarbat Loch. It is well described by Pennant:—"The approach was magnificent; a fine bay in front, about a mile deep, having a ruined castle near the lower end, on a low far-projecting neck of land, that forms another harbour, with a narrow passage; but within has three fathom of water, even at the lowest ebb. Beyond is a little plain watered by a stream, and inhabited by the people of a small village. The whole is environed with a theatre of mountains; and in the background the serrated crags of Grianan-Athol soar above."—PENNANT'S *Tour to the Western Isles*, pp. 191–2. Ben-Ghaoil, "the mountain of the winds," is generally known by its English and less poetical name of Goatfield.

* P. 240.—The passage in Barbour describing the landing of Bruce, and his being recognised by Douglas, and those of his followers who had preceded him, by the sound of his horn, is in the original singularly simple and affecting:—The king arrived in Arran with thirty-three small row-boats. He interrogated a female if there had arrived any warlike men of late in that country. "Surely, sir," she replied, "I can tell you of many who lately came hither, discomfited the English governor, and blockaded his castle of Brodick. They maintain themselves in a wood at no great distance." The king, truly conceiving that this must be Douglas and his followers, who had lately set forth to try their fortune in Arran, desired the woman to conduct him to the wood. She obeyed.

"The king then blew his horn on high;
And gert his men that were him by,
Hold them still, and all privy;
And syne again his horne blew he.
James of Dowglas heard him blow,
And at the last alone gan know,
And said, 'Soothly yon is the king;
I know long while since his blowing.'
The third time therewithall he blew,
And then Sir Robert Boid it knew;
And said, 'Yon is the king, but dread,
Go we forth till him, better speed.'
Then went they till the king in hye,
And him inclined courteously.
And blithly welcomed them the king,
And was joyful of their meeting,
And kissed them; and speared† syne
How they had fared in hunting?
And they him told all, but lesing‡
Syne laud they God of their meeting.
Syne with the king till his harbourye
Went both joyfu' and jolly."

BARBOUR'S *Bruce*, Book v., pp. 115, 116.

* P. 240.—The kind and yet fiery character of Edward Bruce is well painted by Barbour, in the account of his behaviour after the battle of Bannockburn. Sir Walter Ross, one of the very few Scottish nobles who fell in that battle, was so dearly beloved by Edward, that he wished the victory had been lost, so Ross had lived.

* P. 242.—This incident, which illustrates so happily the chivalrous generosity of Bruce's character, is one of the many simple and natural traits recorded by Barbour. It occurred during the expedition which Bruce made to Ireland, to support the pretensions of his brother Edward to the throne of that kingdom.

* P. 244.—The interior of the island of Arran abounds with beautiful Highland scenery. The hills, being very rocky and precipitous, afford some cataracts of great height, though of inconsiderable breadth. There is one pass over the river Machrai, renowned for the dilemma of a poor woman, who, being tempted by the narrowness of the ravine to step across, succeeded in making the first movement, but took fright when it became necessary to move the other foot, and remained in a posture equally ludic-

† Asked. ‡ Without lying.

rous and dangerous, until some chance passenger assisted her to extricate herself. It is said she remained there some hours.

* P. 244.—Brodick or Brathwick Castle, in the Isle of Arran, is an ancient fortress near an open roadstead called Brodick Bay, and not far distant from a tolerable harbour, closed in by the Island of Lamlash. This important place had been assailed a short time before Bruce's arrival in the island. James, Lord Douglas, who accompanied Bruce to his retreat in Rachrine, seems, in the spring of 1306, to have tired of his abode there, and set out accordingly, in the phrase of the times, to see what adventure God would send him. Sir Robert Boyd accompanied him; and his knowledge of the localities of Arran appears to have directed his course thither. They landed in the island privately, and appear to have laid an ambush for Sir John Hastings, the English Governor of Brodick, and surprised a considerable supply of arms and provisions, and nearly took the castle itself. Indeed, that they actually did so has been generally averred by historians, although it does not appear from the narrative of Barbour. . . . The castle is now much modernised, but has a dignified appearance, being surrounded by flourishing plantations.

* P. 244.—Barbour, with great simplicity, gives an anecdote, from which it would seem that the vice of profane swearing, afterwards too general among the Scottish nation, was, at this time, confined to military men. As Douglas, after Bruce's return to Scotland, was roving about the mountainous country of Tweeddale, near the water of Line, he chanced to hear some persons in a farm-house say, "*the devil.*" Concluding, from this hardy expression, that the house contained warlike guests, he immediately assailed it, and had the good fortune to make prisoners Thomas Randolph, afterwards the famous Earl of Murray, and Alexander Stuart, Lord Bonkle. Both were then in the English interest, and had come into that country with the purpose of driving out Douglas. They afterwards ranked among Bruce's most zealous adherents.

* P. 247.—The following are the words of an ingenious correspondent, to whom I am obliged for much information respecting Turnberry and its neighbourhood:—"The only tradition now remembered of the landing of Robert the Bruce in Carrick, relates to the fire seen by him from the Isle of Arran. It is still generally reported, and religiously believed by many, that this fire was really the work of supernatural power, unassisted by the hand of any mortal being; and it is said, that, for several centuries, the flame rose yearly on the same hour of the same night of the year on which the king first saw it from the turrets of Brodick Castle; and some go so far as to say, that if the exact time were known, it would be still seen. That this superstitious notion is very ancient, is evident from the place where the fire is said to have appeared being called the Bogles' Brae, beyond the remembrance of man. In support of this curious belief, it is said that the practice of burning heath for the improvement of land was to an unknown; that a spunkie (Jack o' lanthorn) could not have been seen across the breadth of the Firth of Clyde, between Ayrshire and Arran; and that the courier of Bruce was his kinsman, and never suspected of treachery."—Letter from Mr. Joseph Train, of Newton-Stewart.

* P. 250.—I have followed the flattering and pleasing tradition, that the Bruce, after his descent upon the coast of Ayrshire, actually gained possession of his maternal castle. But the tradition is not accurate. The fact is, that he was only strong enough to alarm and drive in the outposts of the English garrison, then commanded, not by Clifford, as assumed in the text, but by Percy. Neither was Clifford slain upon this occasion, though he had several skirmishes with Bruce. He fell afterwards in the battle of Bannockburn. Bruce, after alarming the castle of Turnberry, and surprising some part of the garrison, who were quartered without the walls of the fortress, retreated into the mountainous part of Carrick, and there made himself so strong, that the English were obliged to evacuate Turnberry, and at length the Castle of Ayr. Many of his benefactions and royal gifts attest his attachment to the hereditary followers of his house in this part of the country.

* P. 250.—The first important advantage gained by Bruce, after landing at Turnberry, was over Aymer de Valence, Earl of Pembroke, the same by whom he had been defeated near Methven. They met, as has been said, by appointment, at Loudonhill, in the west of Scotland. Pembroke sustained a defeat; and from that time Bruce was at the head of a considerable flying army. Yet he was subsequently obliged to retreat into Aberdeenshire, and was there assailed by Comyn, Earl of Buchan, desirous to avenge the death of his relative, the Red Comyn, and supported by a body of English troops under Philip de Mowbray. Bruce was at the time ill of a scrofulous disorder, but took horse to meet his enemies, although obliged to be supported on either side. He was victorious, and it is said that the agitation of his spirits restored his health.

* P. 250.—The "good Lord James of Douglas," during these commotions, often took from the English his own castle of Douglas, but being unable to garrison it, contented himself with destroying the fortifications, and retiring into the mountains. As a reward to his patriotism, it is said to have been prophesied, that how often soever Douglas Castle should be destroyed, it should always again rise more magnificent from its ruins. Upon one of these occasions he used fearful cruelty, causing all the store of provisions, which the English had laid up in his castle, to be heaped together, bursting the wine and beer casks among the wheat and flour, slaughtering the cattle upon the same spot, and upon the top of the whole cutting the throats of the English prisoners. This pleasantry of the "good Lord James" is commemorated under the name of the *Douglas's Larder.*

* P. 250.—"John de St. John, with 15,000 horsemen, had advanced to oppose the inroad

of the Scots. By a forced march he endeavoured to surprise them, but intelligence of his motions was timeously received. The courage of Edward Bruce, approaching to temerity, frequently enabled him to achieve what men of more judicious valour would never have attempted. He ordered the infantry, and the meaner sort of his army, to entrench themselves in strong narrow ground. He himself, with fifty horsemen well harnessed, issued forth under cover of a thick mist, surprised the English on their march, attacked and dispersed them."—DALRYMPLE'S *Annals of Scotland*, quarto, Edinburgh, 1779, p. 25.

* P. 250.—Thomas Randolph, Bruce's sister's son, a renowned Scottish chief, was in the early part of his life not more remarkable for consistency than Bruce himself. He espoused his uncle's party when Bruce first assumed the crown, and was made prisoner at the fatal battle of Methven, in which his relative's hopes appeared to be ruined. Randolph accordingly not only submitted to the English, but took an active part against Bruce; appeared in arms against him; and, in the skirmish in which he was so closely pursued by the bloodhound, it is said his nephew took his standard with his own hand. But Randolph was afterwards made prisoner by Douglas in Tweeddale, and brought before King Robert. Some harsh language was exchanged between the uncle and nephew, and the latter was committed for a time to close custody. Afterwards, however, they were reconciled, and Randolph was created Earl of Moray about 1312. After this period he eminently distinguished himself, first by the surprise of Edinburgh Castle, and afterwards by many similar enterprises, conducted with equal courage and ability.

* P. 251.—When a long train of success, actively improved by Robert Bruce, had made him master of almost all Scotland, Stirling Castle continued to hold out. The care of the blockade was committed by the King to his brother Edward, who concluded a treaty with Sir Philip Mowbray, the governor, that he should surrender the fortress, if it were not succoured by the King of England before St. John the Baptist's Day. The King severely blamed his brother for the impolicy of a treaty which gave time to the King of England to advance to the relief of the castle with all his assembled forces, and obliged himself either to meet them in battle with an inferior force, or to retreat with dishonour. "Let all England come," answered the reckless Edward; "we would fight them were they more." The consequence was, of course, that each kingdom mustered its strength for the expected battle; and as the space agreed upon reached from Lent to Midsummer, full time was allowed for that purpose.

* P. 251.—Edward the First, with the usual policy of a conqueror, employed the Welsh, whom he had subdued, to assist him in his Scottish wars, for which their habits, as mountaineers, particularly fitted them. But this policy was not without its risks. Previous to the battle of Falkirk, the Welsh quarrelled with the English men-at-arms, and after bloodshed on both parts, separated themselves from his army, and the feud between them, at so dangerous and critical a juncture, was reconciled with difficulty. Edward II. followed his father's example in this particular, and with no better success. They could not be brought to exert themselves in the cause of their conquerors. But they had an indifferent reward for their forbearance. Without arms, and clad only in scanty dresses of linen cloth, they appeared naked in the eyes even of the Scottish peasantry; and after the rout of Bannockburn, were massacred by them in great numbers, as they retired in confusion towards their own country. They were under the command of Sir Maurice de Berkeley.

* P. 251.—There is in the Fœdera an invitation to Eth O'Connor, chief of the Irish of Connaught, setting forth that the king was about to move against his Scottish rebels, and therefore requesting the attendance of all the force he could muster, either commanded by himself in person, or by some nobleman of his race. These auxiliaries were to be commanded by Richard de Burgh, Earl of Ulster.

* P. 253.—The English vanguard, commanded by the Earls of Gloucester and Hereford, came in sight of the Scottish army upon the evening of the 23rd of June. Bruce was then riding upon a little palfrey, in front of his foremost line, putting his host in order. It was then that the personal encounter took place betwixt him and Sir Henry de Bohun, a gallant English knight, the issue of which had a great effect upon the spirits of both armies.

* P. 255.—There is an old tradition, that the well-known Scottish tune, "Hey, tutti, taitti," was Bruce's march at the battle of Bannockburn. The late Mr. Ritson, no granter of propositions, doubts whether the Scots had any martial music, and quotes Froissart's account of each soldier in the host bearing a little horn, on which, at the onset, they would make such a horrible noise, as if all the devils of hell had been among them. He observes, that these horns are the only music mentioned by Barbour, and concludes, that it must remain a moot point whether Bruce's army were cheered by the sound even of a solitary bagpipe.—*Historical Essay prefixed to Ritson's Scottish Songs.* It may be observed in passing, that the Scottish of this period certainly observed some musical cadence, even in winding their horns, since Bruce was at once recognised by his followers from his mode of blowing. But the tradition, true or false, has been the means of securing to Scotland one of the finest lyrics in the language, the celebrated war-song of Burns—"Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled."

* P. 255.—"Maurice, abbot of Inchaffray, placing himself on an eminence, celebrated mass in sight of the Scottish army. He then passed along the front, bare-footed, and bearing a crucifix in his hands, and exhorting the Scots, in few and forcible words, to combat for their rights and their liberty. The Scots kneeled down. 'They yield,' cried Edward; 'see, they implore mercy.'—'They do,' answered Ingelram de Umfraville, 'but not ours. On

that field they will be victorious, or die.'"—*Annals of Scotland*, vol. ii. p. 47.

* P. 255.—The English archers commenced the attack with their usual bravery and dexterity. But against a force whose importance he had learned by fatal experience, Bruce was provided. A small but select body of cavalry were detached from the right, under command of Sir Robert Keith. They rounded, as I conceive, the marsh called Milton-bog, and, keeping the firm ground, charged the left flank and rear of the English archers. As the bowmen had no spears nor long weapons fit to defend themselves against horse, they were instantly thrown into disorder, and spread through the whole English army a confusion from which they never fairly recovered.

Although the success of this manœuvre was evident, it is very remarkable that the Scottish generals do not appear to have profited by the lesson. Almost every subsequent battle which they lost against England was decided by the archers, to whom the close and compact array of the Scottish phalanx afforded an exposed and unresisting mark. The bloody battle of Halidoun-hill, fought scarce twenty years afterwards, was so completely gained by the archers, that the English are said to have lost only one knight, one esquire, and a few foot-soldiers. At the battle of Neville's Cross, in 1346, where David II. was defeated and made prisoner, John de Graham, observing the loss which the Scots sustained from the English bowmen, offered to charge and disperse them, if a hundred men-at-arms were put under his command. "*But*, to confess the truth," says Fordun, "he could not procure a single horseman for the service proposed." Of such little use is experience in war, when its results are opposed by habit or prejudice.

* P. 256.—Roger Ascham quotes a similar Scottish proverb, "whereby they give the whole praise of shooting honestly to Englishmen, saying thus, 'that every English archer beareth under his girdle twenty-four Scottes.' Indeed Toxophilus says before, and truly of the Scottish nation, 'The Scottes surely be good men of warre in theyre owne feates as can be; but as for shootinge, they can neither use it to any profite, nor yet challenge it for any praise.'"—*Works of Ascham, edited by Bennet*, 4to, p. 110.

It is said, I trust incorrectly, by an ancient English historian, that the "good Lord James of Douglas" dreaded the superiority of the English archers so much, that when he made any of them a prisoner, he gave him the option of losing the forefinger of his right hand, or his right eye, either species of mutilation rendering him incapable to use the bow. I have mislaid the reference to this curious passage.

* P. 256.—It is generally alleged by historians, that the English men-at-arms fell into the hidden snare which Bruce had prepared for them. Barbour does not mention this circumstance. According to his account, Randolph, seeing the slaughter made by the cavalry on the right wing among the archers, advanced courageously against the main body of the English, and entered into close combat with them. Douglas and Stuart, who commanded the Scottish centre, led their division also to the charge, and the battle becoming general along the whole line, was obstinately maintained on both sides for a long space of time; the Scottish archers doing great execution among the English men-at-arms, after the bowmen of England were dispersed.

* P. 256.—I have been told that this line requires an explanatory note; and, indeed, those who witness the silent patience with which horses submit to the most cruel usage may be permitted to doubt that, in moments of sudden and intolerable anguish, they utter a most melancholy cry. Lord Erskine, in a speech made in the House of Lords, upon a bill for enforcing humanity towards animals, noticed this remarkable fact, in language which I will not mutilate by attempting to repeat it. It was my fortune, on one occasion, to hear a horse, in a moment of agony, utter a thrilling scream, which I still consider the most melancholy sound I ever heard.

* P. 257.—When the engagement between the main bodies had lasted some time, Bruce made a decisive movement by bringing up the Scottish reserve. It is traditionally said, that at this crisis he addressed the Lord of the Isles in a phrase used as a motto by some of his descendants, "My trust is constant in thee." Barbour intimates, that the reserve "assembled on one field," that is, on the same line with the Scottish forces already engaged; which leads Lord Hailes to conjecture that the Scottish ranks must have been much thinned by slaughter, since, in that circumscribed ground, there was room for the reserve to fall into the line. But the advance of the Scottish cavalry must have contributed a good deal to form the vacancy occupied by the reserve.

* P. 257.—The followers of the Scottish camp observed, from the Gillies' Hill in the rear, the impression produced upon the English army by the bringing up of the Scottish reserve, and, prompted by the enthusiasm of the moment, or the desire of plunder, assumed, in a tumultuary manner, such arms as they found nearest, fastened sheets to tent-poles and lances, and showed themselves like a new army advancing to battle.

The unexpected apparition of what seemed a new army, completed the confusion which already prevailed among the English, who fled in every direction, and were pursued with immense slaughter.

NOTES TO THE BRIDAL OF TRIERMAIN.

* P. 264.—A circular intrenchment, about half-a-mile from Penrith, is thus popularly termed. The circle within the ditch is about one hundred and sixty paces in circumference, with openings, or approaches, directly opposite to each other. As the ditch is on the inner side, it could not be intended for the purpose of defence, and it has reasonably been conjectured, that the enclosure was designed for the solemn exercise of feats of chivalry, and the embankment around for the convenience of the spectators.

* P. 264.—Higher up the river Eamont than Arthur's Round Table, is a prodigious enclosure of great antiquity, formed by a collection of stones upon the top of a gently sloping hill, called Mayburgh.

* P. 269.—The author has an indistinct recollection of an adventure, somewhat similar to that which is here ascribed to King Arthur, having befallen one of the ancient Kings of Denmark. The horn in which the burning liquor was presented to that monarch, is said still to be preserved in the Royal Museum at Copenhagen.

* P. 269.—The characters named in the stanza are all of them more or less distinguished in the romances which treat of King Arthur and his Round Table, and their names are strung together, according to the established custom of minstrels upon such occasions.

NOTES TO THE FIELD OF WATERLOO.

* P. 285.—The reaper in Flanders carries in his left hand a stick with an iron hook, with which he collects as much grain as he can cut at one sweep with a short scythe, which he holds in his right hand. They carry on this double process with great spirit and dexterity.

* P. 286.—It was affirmed by the prisoners of war, that Bonaparte had promised his army, in case of victory, twenty-four hours' plunder of the city of Brussels.

* P. 286.—The characteristic obstinacy of Napoleon was never more fully displayed than in what we may be permitted to hope will prove the last of his fields. He would listen to no advice, and allow of no obstacles. An eye-witness has given the following account of his demeanour towards the end of the action:—

"It was near seven o'clock; Bonaparte, who till then had remained upon the ridge of the hill whence he could best behold what passed, contemplated with a stern countenance the scene of this horrible slaughter. The more that obstacles seemed to multiply, the more his obstinacy seemed to increase. He became indignant at these unforeseen difficulties; and, far from fearing to push to extremities an army whose confidence in him was boundless, he ceased not to pour down fresh troops, and to give orders to march forward—to charge with the bayonet—to carry by storm. He was repeatedly informed, from different points, that the day went against him, and that the troops seemed to be disordered; to which he only replied—'*En avant! En avant!*'

"One general sent to inform the Emperor that he was in a position which he could not maintain, because it was commanded by a battery, and requested to know, at the same time, in what way he should protect his division from the murderous fire of the English artillery. 'Let him storm the battery,' replied Bonaparte, and turned his back on the aide-de-camp who brought the message."—*Rélation de la Bataille de Mont-St.-Jean. Par un Témoin Oculaire.* Paris, 1815, 8vo, p. 51.

* P. 286.—It has been reported that Bonaparte charged at the head of his guards, at the last period of this dreadful conflict. This, however, is not accurate. He came down indeed to a hollow part of the high road, leading to Charleroi, within less than a quarter of a mile of the farm of La Haye Sainte, one of the points most fiercely disputed. Here he harangued the guards, and informed them that his preceding operations had destroyed the British infantry and cavalry, and that they had only to support the fire of the artillery, which they were to attack with the bayonet. This exhortation was received with shouts of *Vive l'Empereur*, which were heard all along our line, and led to an idea that Napoleon was charging in person. But the guards were led on by Ney; nor did Bonaparte approach nearer the scene of action than the spot already mentioned, which the rising banks on each side rendered secure from all such balls as did not come in a straight line. He witnessed the earlier part of the battle from places yet more remote, particularly from an observatory which had been placed there by the King of the Netherlands, some weeks before, for the purpose of surveying the country.† It is not meant to infer from these particulars that Napoleon showed, on that memorable occasion, the least deficiency in personal courage; on the contrary, he evinced the greatest composure and presence of mind during the whole

† The mistakes concerning this observatory have been mutual. The English supposed it was erected for the use of Bonaparte: and a French writer affirms it was constructed by the Duke of Wellington.

action. But it is no less true that report has erred in ascribing to him any desperate efforts of valour for recovery of the battle; and it is remarkable, that during the whole carnage, none of his suite were either killed or wounded, whereas scarcely one of the Duke of Wellington's attendants escaped unhurt.

* P. 286.—In riding up to a regiment which was hard pressed, the Duke called to the men, "Soldiers, we must never be beat,—what will they say in England?" It is needless to say how this appeal was answered.

* P. 286.—A private soldier of the 95th regiment compared the sound which took place immediately upon the British cavalry mingling with those of the enemy, to "*a thousand tinkers at work mending pots and kettles.*"

* P. 287.—The French troops invariably withdrew before the charge of the British bayonets. Even the Imperial Guards hardly stood until the British were within thirty yards of them.

* P. 288.—Sir Thomas Picton, Sir William Ponsonby, Sir William de Lancy, and numberless gallant officers.

* P. 288.—Colonel Sir William de Lancy had married the beautiful Miss Hall only two months before the battle of Waterloo.

* P. 288.—Colonel Miller of the Guards, when lying mortally wounded in the attack on the Bois de Bossa, desired to see once more the colours of his regiment. They were waved about his head, and he died declaring that he was satisfied.

* P. 288.—Colonel Cameron fell at Quatre Bras, heading a charge of the 92nd Highlanders.

* P. 288.—"Generous Gordon"—brother to the Earl of Aberdeen—who fell by the side of the Duke during the heat of the action.

* P. 289.—"Hougomont"—a chateau with a garden and wood round it. A post of great importance, valiantly held by the guards during the battle.

NOTES TO THE EVE OF ST. JOHN.

* P. 321.—"Battle of Ancram Moor."—Lord Evers and Sir Brian Latoun, during the year 1544, committed the most dreadful ravages upon the Scottish frontiers, compelling most of the inhabitants, and especially the men of Liddesdale, to take assurance under the King of England. Upon the 17th November, in that year, the sum total of their depredations stood thus, in the bloody ledger of Lord Evers:—

Towns, towers, barnekynes, paryshe churches, bastill houses, burned and destroyed,	192
Scots slain,	403
Prisoners taken,	816
Nolt (cattle),	10,386
Shepe,	12,492
Nags and geldings,	1,296
Gayt,	200
Bolls of corn,	850
Insight gear, &c. (furniture), an incalculable quantity.	

MURDIN'S *State Papers*, vol. i. p. 51.

The King of England had promised to these two barons a feudal grant of the country, which they had thus reduced to a desert; upon hearing which, Archibald Douglas, the seventh Earl of Angus, is said to have sworn to write the deed of investiture upon their skins, with sharp pens and bloody ink, in resentment for their having defaced the tombs of his ancestors at Melrose.—GODSCROFT. In 1545, Lord Evers and Latoun again entered Scotland, with an army consisting of 3,000 mercenaries, 1,500 English Borderers, and 700 assured Scottish men, chiefly Armstrongs, Turnbulls, and other broken clans. In this second incursion, the English generals even exceeded their former cruelty. Evers burned the tower of Broomhouse, with its lady (a noble and aged woman, says Lesley) and her whole family. The English penetrated as far as Melrose, which they had destroyed last year, and which they now again pillaged. As they returned towards Jedburgh, they were followed by Angus at the head of 1,000 horse, who was shortly after joined by the famous Norman Lesley, with a body of Fife men. The English, being probably unwilling to cross the Teviot while the Scots hung upon their rear, halted upon Ancram Moor, above the village of that name; and the Scottish general was deliberating whether to advance or retire, when Sir Walter Scott† of Buccleuch came up at full speed with a small but chosen body of his retainers, the rest of whom were near at hand. By the advice of this experienced warrior (to whose conduct Pitscottie and Buchanan ascribe the success of the engagement), Angus withdrew from the height which he occupied, and drew up his forces behind it, upon a piece of low flat ground called Panier-heugh, or Paniel-heugh. The spare horses being sent to an eminence in their

† The Editor has found no instance upon record of this family having taken assurance with England. Hence, they usually suffered dreadfully from the English forays. In August, 1544 (the year preceding the battle), the whole lands belonging to Buccleuch, in West Teviotdale, were harried by Evers; the outworks, or barmkin, of the tower of Branxholm burned; eight Scots slain, thirty made prisoners, and an immense prey of horses, cattle, and sheep carried off. The lands upon Kale Water, belonging to the same chieftain, were also plundered, and much spoil obtained; 30 Scots slain, and the Moss Tower (a fortress near Eckford) *smoked very sore*. Thus Buccleuch had a long account to settle at Ancram Moor.—MURDIN'S *State Papers*, pp. 45, 46.

rear, appeared to the English to be the main body of the Scots in the act of flight. Under this persuasion, Evers and Latoun hurried precipitately forward, and having ascended the hill, which their foes had abandoned, were no less dismayed than astonished to find the phalanx of Scottish spearmen drawn up in firm array upon the flat ground below. The Scots, in their turn, became the assailants. A heron, roused from the marshes by the tumult, soared away betwixt the encountering armies: "O!" exclaimed Angus, "that I had here my white goss-hawk, that we might all yoke at once!" —Godscroft. The English, breathless and fatigued, having the setting sun and wind full in their faces, were unable to withstand the resolute and desperate charge of the Scottish lances. No sooner had they begun to waver, than their own allies, the assured Borderers, who had been waiting the event, threw aside their red crosses, and, joining their countrymen, made a most merciless slaughter among the English fugitives, the pursuers calling upon each other to "remember Broomhouse!"—Lesley, p. 478.

In the battle fell Lord Evers and his son, together with Sir Brian Latoun and 800 Englishmen, many of whom were persons of rank. A thousand prisoners were taken. Among these was a patriotic alderman of London, Read by name, who, having contumaciously refused to pay his portion of a benevolence, demanded from the city by Henry VIII., was sent by royal authority to serve against the Scots. These, at settling his ransom, he found still more exorbitant in their exactions than the monarch.—Redpath's *Border History*, p. 563.

Evers was much regretted by King Henry, who swore to avenge his death upon Angus, against whom he conceived himself to have particular grounds of resentment, on account of favours received by the earl at his hands. The answer of Angus was worthy of a Douglas: "Is our brother-in-law offended,"† said he, "that I, as a good Scotsman, have avenged my ravaged country, and the defaced tombs of my ancestors, upon Ralph Evers? They were better men than he, and I was bound to do no less. And will he take my life for that? Little knows King Henry the skirts of Kirnetable:‡ I can keep myself there against all his English host."—Godscroft.

Such was the noted battle of Ancram Moor. The spot on which it was fought is called Lilyard's Edge, from an Amazonian Scottish woman of that name, who is reported, by tradition, to have distinguished herself in the same manner as Squire Witherington. The old people point out her monument, now broken and defaced. The inscription is said to have been legible within this century, and to have run thus:—

"Fair maiden Lylliard lies under this stane,
Little was her stature, but great was her fame;
Upon the English loons she laid mony thumps,
And when her legs were cutted off, she fought upon her stumps."

Vide *Account of the Parish of Melrose.*

It appears, from a passage in Stowe, that an ancestor of Lord Evers held also a grant of Scottish lands from an English monarch. "I have seen," says the historian, "under the broad-seale of the said King Edward I., a manor, called Ketnes, in the county of Forfar, in Scotland, and neere the furthest part of the same nation northward, given to John Ure, and his heires, ancestor to the Lord Ure that now is, for his service done in these parts, with market, &c., dated at Lanercost, the 20th day of October, anno regis 34."—Stowe's *Annals*, p. 210. This grant, like that of Henry, must have been dangerous to the receiver.

* P. 323.—The circumstance of the nun "who never saw the day" is not entirely imaginary. About fifty years ago, an unfortunate female wanderer took up her residence in a dark vault, among the ruins of Dryburgh Abbey, which, during the day, she never quitted. When night fell, she issued from this miserable habitation, and went to the house of Mr. Haliburton of Newmains, or to that of Mr. Erskine of Sheilfield, two gentlemen of the neighbourhood. From their charity she obtained such necessaries as she could be prevailed upon to accept. At twelve, each night, she lighted her candle, and returned to her vault, assuring her friendly neighbours that, during her absence, her habitation was arranged by a spirit, to whom she gave the uncouth name of *Fat lips;* describing him as a little man, wearing heavy iron shoes, with which he trampled the clay floor of the vault, to dispel the damps. This circumstance caused her to be regarded, by the well-informed, with compassion, as deranged in her understanding; and, by the vulgar, with some degree of terror. The cause of her adopting this extraordinary mode of life she would never explain. It was, however, believed to have been occasioned by a vow, that, during the absence of a man to whom she was attached, she would never look upon the sun. Her lover never returned. He fell during the civil war of 1745-6, and she never more would behold the light of day.

The vault, or rather dungeon, in which this unfortunate woman lived and died, passes still by the name of the supernatural being with which its gloom was tenanted by her disturbed imagination, and few of the neighbouring peasants dare enter it by night.—1803.

† Angus had married the widow of James IV., sister to King Henry VIII.

‡ Kirnetable, now called Cairntable, is a mountainous tract at the head of Douglasdale.

NOTES TO CADYOW CASTLE.

* P. 325.—*In Caledonia olim frequens erat sylvestris quidam bos, nunc vero rarior, qui, colore candidissimo, jubam densam et demissam instar leonis gestat, truculentus ac ferus ab humano genere abhorrens, ut quæcunque homines vel manibus contrectârint, vel halitu perflaverint, ab iis multos post dies omnino abstinuerunt. Ad hoc tanta audacia huic bovi indita erat, ut non solum irritatus equites furenter prosterneret, sed ne tantillum lacessitus omnes promiscue homines cornibus ac ungulis peterit; ac canum, qui apud nos ferocissimi sunt, impetus plane contemneret. Ejus carnes cartilaginosæ, sed saporis suavissimi. Erat is olim per illam vastissimam Caledoniæ sylvam frequens, sed humana ingluvie jam assumptus tribus tantum locis est reliquus, Strivilingii, Cumbernaldiæ, et Kincarniæ.*—LESLÆUS, Scotiæ Descriptio, p. 13.

* P. 325.—Lord Claud Hamilton, second son of the Duke of Chatelherault, and commendator of the Abbey of Paisley, acted a distinguished part during the troubles of Queen Mary's reign, and remained unalterably attached to the cause of that unfortunate princess. He led the van of her army at the fatal battle of Langside, and was one of the commanders at the Raid of Stirling, which had so nearly given complete success to the Queen's faction. He was ancestor of the present Marquis of Abercorn.

* P. 325.—This barony, stretching along the banks of the Esk, near Auchendinny, belonged to Bothwellhaugh, in right of his wife. The ruins of the mansion, from whence she was expelled in the brutal manner which occasioned her death, are still to be seen in a hollow glen beside the river. Popular report tenants them with the restless ghost of the Lady Bothwellhaugh; whom, however, it confounds with Lady Anne Bothwell, whose *Lament* is so popular. This spectre is so tenacious of her rights, that, a part of the stones of the ancient edifice having been employed in building or repairing the present Woodhouselee, she has deemed it a part of her privilege to haunt that house also; and, even of very late years, has excited considerable disturbance and terror among the domestics. This is a more remarkable vindication of the *rights of ghosts*, as the present Woodhouselee, which gives his title to the Honourable Alexander Fraser Tytler, a senator of the College of Justice, is situated on the slope of the Pentland Hills, distant at least four miles from her proper abode. She always appears in white, and with her child in her arms.

* P. 326.—Birrel informs us, that Bothwellhaugh, being closely pursued, "after that spur and wand had failed him, he drew forth his dagger, and strocke his horse behind, whilk caused the horse to leap a very brode stanke [*i. e.*, ditch], by whilk means he escapit, and gat away from all the rest of the horses."—BIRREL'S *Diary*, p. 18

* P. 326.—Murray's death took place shortly after an expedition to the Borders; which is thus commemorated by the author of his Elegy:—

"So having stablischt all things in this sort,
To Liddisdaill agane he did resort:
Throw Ewisdail, Eskdail, and all the daills
rode he,
And also lay three nights in Cannabie,
Whair na prince lay thir hundred yeiris
before.
Nae thief durst stir, they did him feir sae sair;
And, that they suld na mair thair thift allege,
Threescore and twelf he brocht of thame in
pledge,
Syne wardit thame, whilk maid the rest keep
ordour;
Than mycht the rasch-bus keep ky on the
Border."

Scottish Poems, 16th century, p. 232.

* P. 326.—*Hackbut bent*—Gun cock'd. The carbine with which the Regent was shot is preserved at Hamilton Palace. It is a brass piece, of a middling length, very small in the bore, and, what is rather extrordinary, appears to have been rifled or indented in the barrel. It had a matchlock, for which a modern firelock has been injudiciously substituted.

* P. 326.—This clan of Lennox Highlanders was attached to the Regent Murray. Hollinshed, speaking of the battle of Langside, says, "In this batayle the vallancie of an Heiland gentleman, called Macfarlane, stood the Regent's part in great steede; for, in the hottest brunte of the fighte, he came up with two hundred of his friendes and countrymen, and so manfully gave in upon the flankes of the Queen's people, that he was a great cause of the disordering of them. This Macfarlane had been lately before, as I have heard, condemned to die, for some outrage by him committed, and obtayning pardon through suyte of the Countess of Murray, he recompensed that clemencie by this piece of service now at this batayle." Calderwood's account is less favourable to the Macfarlanes. He states that "Macfarlane, with his Highlandmen, fled from the wing where they were set. The Lord Lindsay, who stood nearest to them in the Regent's battle, said, 'Let them go! I shall fill their place better;' and so, stepping forward, with a company of fresh men, charged the enemy, whose spears were now spent, with long weapons, so that they were driven back by force, being before almost overthrown by the avaunt-guard and harquebusiers, and so were turned to flight."—CALDERWOOD'S *MS. apud* KEITH, p. 480. Melville mentions the flight of the vanguard, but states it to have been commanded by Morton, and composed chiefly of commoners of the barony of Renfrew.

* P. 326.—The Earl of Glencairn was a steady

adherent of the Regent. George Douglas of Parkhead was a natural brother of the Earl of Morton, whose horse was killed by the same ball by which Murray fell.

* P. 326.—Lord Lindsay of the Byres was the most ferocious and brutal of the Regent's faction, and, as such, was employed to extort Mary's signature to the deed of resignation presented to her in Lochleven Castle. He discharged his commission with the most savage rigour; and it is even said, that when the weeping captive, in the act of signing, averted her eyes from the fatal deed, he pinched her arm with the grasp of his iron glove.

* P. 326.—Not only had the Regent notice of the intended attempt upon his life, but even of the very house from which it was threatened. With that infatuation at which men wonder, after such events have happened, he deemed it would be a sufficient precaution to ride briskly past the dangerous spot. But even this was prevented by the crowd; so that Bothwellhaugh had time to take a deliberate aim.—SPOTTISWOOD. p. 233. BUCHANAN.

NOTES TO THE GRAY BROTHER.

* P. 328.—The barony of Pennycuik, the property of Sir George Clerk, Bart., is held by a singular tenure; the proprietor being bound to sit upon a large rocky fragment called the Buckstane, and wind three blasts of a horn, when the King shall come to hunt on the Borough Muir, near Edinburgh. Hence the family have adopted as their crest a demi-forester proper, winding a horn, with the motto, *Free for a Blast*. The beautiful mansion-house of Pennycuik is much admired, both on account of the architecture and surrounding scenery.

* P. 328.—Auchendinny, situated upon the Esk, below Pennycuik, the present residence of the ingenious H. Mackenzie, Esq., author of the *Man of Feeling*, &c. Edition 1803.

* P. 328.—Melville Castle, the seat of Lord Melville, to whom it gives the title of Viscount, is delightfully situated upon the Esk, near Lasswade.

* P. 328.—The ruins of Roslin Castle, the baronial residence of the ancient family of St. Clair. The Gothic chapel, which is still in beautiful preservation, with the romantic and woody dell in which they are situated, belong to the Right Honourable the Earl of Rosslyn, the representative of the former Lords of Roslin.

* P. 328.—The village and castle of Dalkeith belonged of old to the famous Earl of Morton, but is now the residence of the noble family of Buccleuch. The park extends along the Esk, which is there joined by its sister stream of the same name.

* P. 328.—Hawthornden, the residence of the poet Drummond. A house of more modern date is enclosed, as it were, by the ruins of the ancient castle, and overhangs a tremendous precipice upon the banks of the Esk, perforated by winding caves, which in former times were a refuge to the oppressed patriots of Scotland. Here Drummond received Ben Jonson, who journeyed from London on foot in order to visit him.

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